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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings from a study of self-service systems in eight One-Stop Career Centers that were identified as being particularly efficacious or noteworthy for completeness of resources, ease of use, or outreach to special populations. Chapter I describes the study design. Chapter II describes physical facilities. It focuses on the Resource Rooms in the centers that provide hard-copy and electronic resources and are open to the public on a walk-in basis. It details types of hardware available: computers, copiers, fax machines, televisions for viewing videos, and telephone books. Chapter III explores strategies that centers use to facilitate access to self-service. It discusses centers' efforts to promote access to the Resource Room among five population groups (disabled individuals, individuals with limited computer skills, welfare-to-work program participants, youth customers, and non-native English speakers) and strategies to document performance of the self-service system. Chapter IV addresses how centers' staff Resource Rooms and explains staff members' responsibilities and training. Chapter V describes resources and tools typically available, clarifies challenges centers face in ensuring that resources and tools can be used effectively, and describes strategies centers have devised. Chapter VI describes self-service options centers have devised for employers. Chapter VII presents a summary of cross-site observations and draws conclusions. Appendixes include project profiles that describe major features of the Resource Rooms and an annotated listing of 34 resources. (YLB)

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AN EVALUATION OF THE SELF-SERVICE APPROACH IN ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS

July 1999
Final Report

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We would most especially like to thank the One-Stop Centers who accommodated our site visits, including:

- The Melbourne Job Link Center: Brevard County, FL
- the Workforce Development Center: Bloomington, IN
- The Boston Work Place: Boston, MA
- The Workforce Center of Anoka County: Anoka County, MN
- Capital of Texas Workforce Center (South): Austin/Travis County, TX
- The Morrisville Career Resource Center: Morrisville, VT
- The Career Development Center: Renton, WA
- The Workforce Development Center: Racine, WI

Staff at these Centers were extraordinarily helpful in explaining the operation of their Resource Rooms and sharing their experiences and insights with us. Any valuable lessons described in this report are directly attributable to their good advice.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from a study of self-services systems within the One-Stop context. Self-services are intended to be a critical linchpin of One-Stop service delivery, because of their potential for cost-effectively furthering the universality of services and promoting customer choice. It also is in keeping with the service delivery system envisioned by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which stipulates that One-Stop Career Centers should provide open access to so-called "core services," which are intended to provide broad resources and tools to job seekers and employers with minimal staff assistance.

As part of this study, we examined self-services systems in eight selected One-Stop Career Centers that were identified as being particularly efficacious or noteworthy on any of a number of dimensions, including the completeness of the resources they made available, ease of use or access for customers, or provisions for reaching out to special populations. This report describes what we found and is intended to identify constraints and challenges to effective implementation and to provide examples of well-developed features from which a practitioner audience may benefit. As such, it offers both analytic content and practical guidance.

BACKGROUND

Early in this decade, the General Accounting Office issued a number of reports that drew critical focus on the fragmentation of the nation's employment and training system.[1] Prodded by this attention, as well as on-going efforts within the Clinton Administration to streamline government services in the interests of fostering greater efficiency,[2] the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) undertook an important initiative to promote the consolidation of workforce development services. As part of this effort, DOL awarded planning and implementation grants to states and local Learning Laboratories to begin the formation of a One-Stop service delivery system. The principles that constituted the four cornerstones of this effort were to promote:

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[1] See, for example, U.S. General Accounting Office (1994) "Multiple Employment Training Programs: Overlap Among Programs Raises Questions About Efficiency."

[2] A prime moving force in this regard was the Gore Report of the National Performance Review (1993), "Creating a Government That Works Better and Costs Less."

- Universal access, by which core workforce development services would be available to all interested persons, including job seekers and employers, regardless of their eligibility for specific categorical programs.
- Customer choice, in the sense of giving customers multiple methods of access and the opportunity to select services and service providers that they feel best meet their needs.
- Service integration, which should result in a seamless system of services.
- Accountability for outcomes, by which systems would monitor outcomes and their use of taxpayer funds and make modifications to service delivery accordingly.

In this effort, DOL foreshadowed the major tenets of WIA, the workforce legislation that supplanted the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Substituting for JTPA's emphasis on tightly restricted eligibility for providing training services to the economically disadvantaged, WIA Title I, by contrast, emphasizes a three-tier approach to services, consisting of core services, intensive services, and training services. Core services, the broadest tier, are to be made available to all those who might be interested (i.e., the universal customer), and are expected to include career information, Internet browsing of job listings, access to labor market information, job referrals, information about education and training providers, and the like. Intensive services, the next highest rung, are reserved for those who would be unable to obtain employment through core services alone, and can consist of counseling, case management, and short-term prevocational services. Finally, in the tier that is most like JTPA, training services, consisting of skill upgrading through literacy services and occupational skills training, will be provided only to those unable to benefit through core and intensive services, with priority given to public assistance recipients and low-income individuals.

In the context of core services, self-services play a critical role for a number of reasons. First, self-service approaches allow access for all population groups to a broad array of services and information.

Moreover, because customers need not follow a rigid sequence of activities or adhere to an externally imposed schedule (e.g., for class meetings or group sessions), they are empowered to select those service offerings from which they think they can derive the most benefit and do so at the times that are most convenient for them. Further, the electronic delivery of services that often is part-and-parcel of the self-service approach means that customers can enjoy the convenience of accessing information at odd hours or at remote locations (e.g., from home or the office, kiosks, etc.). Apart from convenience and flexibility, the sense of empowerment promoted by self-services may be especially valuable for those customers who might be feeling a sense of helplessness as a result of recent poor labor market experiences.

From the systemic point of view, self-services has other obvious advantages relating to its presumed cost efficiency. If One-Stop Career Centers truly endeavor to offer services that may be useful to a wide spectrum of customers, including both employers and job seekers, then ensuring that large numbers of people can get the services they need hinges on the Center's ability to deliver many services with minimal staff involvement. Thus, drawing on the often used analogy of the service-delivery system as a pyramid, a broad base of people might self-serve by selecting from an array of electronic or other resources, freeing staff to concentrate efforts on a middle-tier in need of group activities or brief staff interventions and a still smaller tier who need time-intensive, individually-tailored interventions. This scheme is very consistent with WIA, which, in addition to core services, establishes a mechanism for delivering *intensive services* and *training services;* the former consists of career counseling, in-depth assessment and testing, and case management and will require modest staff effort, while the latter includes structured work experience and classroom training, and which will generally be provided through a network of providers.

STUDY DESIGN

In mid 1997, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) was awarded a contract to undertake a process study of self-services systems in the One-Stop context. The research objectives of this study were to identify exemplary practices in the use of self-service strategies and understand the constraints and challenges involved in setting up well-developed systems. Among the specific issues we investigated were:

(1) Features that distinguish *effective physical designs* for self-help Centers, including accessibility, convenience, and completeness.

(2) Strategies for *facilitating access*, including how self-services were being promoted and how users were oriented to the available resources.

(3) The feasibility of designing *effective resource tools*, including those characterized by clarity, ease of use, appropriateness for targeted audiences, and a useful and high-quality content.

(4) *Strategies for overcoming barriers* to effective implementation, including adapting existing tools to make them more appropriate for the needs of the local area, providing adequate staff training, providing assistance to customers to enable them to use tools effectively, and ensuring access for those with limited technical skills.

(5) *Types of customers* for which self-service strategies are designed or intended.

(6) The methods Centers have devised for *tracking usage and customer outcomes and satisfaction.*

The research design for looking at these issues involved visits by study team members to selected One-Stop Career Centers around the country to learn about their self-services systems. Because the focus of the study was on learning from the experiences of systems that had made some substantial progress in the design and delivery of self-services, we were interested in selecting sites to study that had exemplary or otherwise noteworthy self-service features. Thus, rather than selecting One-Stop Career Centers randomly, as one might normally do in an evaluation study, we opted to rely on purposive selection.

We used a multi-tiered filtering system to identify sites to visit. As part of this strategy, we first conducted telephone conversations with One-Stop leads at each of the DOL Regional Offices, to solicit nominations of either local sites or states that reputedly were farthest advanced in developing self-services facilities. Because SPR had previously conducted studies of One-Stop Career Centers, we were able to supplement this list of nominees with others that SPR staff members could recommend. This first-tier process resulted in the nomination of 20 states and a number of local One-Stop Career Centers or Learning Labs.

Moving on to the next step in the process, we contacted the One-Stop leads within each state that had been nominated, asking them, in turn, to nominate individual One-Stop Career Centers within their state. When combined with local Centers that had been nominated from the first round, this strategy resulted in a total of 30 nominees.

Finally, we contacted the Center Director at each of these 30 by telephone and asked them to describe their self-service facilities, including: how their Resource Rooms or other self-service facilities were designed to support the development of self-accessed services for job seekers and employers; how their Center addressed the service needs of universal customers, including individuals with disabilities, youths, and first time job seekers; strategies they used to facilitate customers' access and orient them to services; what resources and tools were available, and in what form; and what elements were perceived to be of especially high quality and why.

Based on the information we collected from these telephone calls, we ultimately selected eight sites that would be visited in person and that would become the focus of our study. These eight are identified in Table I-1. Although each of these Centers warranted their selection for one reason or another, we emphasize that many sites that had been nominated but which were left off this list also demonstrated high-quality self-service designs. Conversely, the ones we selected should not necessarily be taken to represent the eight Centers with the best self-service capacities in the nation. Instead, in addition to looking for sites that demonstrated well-developed systems, we strove for broad regional representation and sometimes singled out a site for selection because it had one particular feature from which we thought we could learn a great deal.

The next phase of the study consisted of on-site data collection, lasting approximately 2½ days each, to the eight One-Stop Career Centers that are shown in the table. During these site visits, which took place during the last half of 1998, we undertook a number of data collection activities, including detailed conversations with system administrators, planners and hardware/software designers, and Resource Room staff. We also conducted focus groups or one-on-one conversations with customers, including both job seekers and

Table I-1:
The Sites Selected for the Study

The Melbourne Job Link Center: Brevard County, FL
The Bloomington Workforce Development Center: Bloomington, IN
The Work Place: Boston, MA
The Workforce Center of Anoka County: Anoka County, MN
Capital of Texas Workforce Center (South): Austin/Travis County, TX
The Morrisville Career Resource Center: Morrisville, VT
The Career Development Center: Renton, WA
The Workforce Development Center: Racine, WI

employers. A summary list of topics that we addressed with these respondents is included in Exhibit I-1.

Additional data gathering consisted of the collection of written materials, such as brochures describing the facilities and instruction booklets or help guides. We also observed customers using the facilities, paying particular attention to what it was they were doing, how comfortable they were in their tasks, and how or if they interacted with staff. Finally, we played the role of the job seeker—in essence, putting ourselves in the customers' shoes—by trying out the various software and accessing Web sites, to gauge for ourselves how comprehensive the available resources were and how easy they were to use.

FOCUS OF THE REPORT

Rather than being discrete and with clear boundaries, self-services can be thought of as constituting a continuum. On the one extreme, some customers truly do access resources made available through workforce development initiatives with no staff assistance of any kind. The clearest example of this might be the job seeker who accesses from home any one of a number of excellent Web sites that provide information about job listings, labor market information, and more, including DOL's America's Job Bank and America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS). These sites were established just a few years ago and have proven very successful and are presumably enormously helpful to users, as evidenced by the millions of "hits" these sites achieve each month. However, access to such sites from the home were not the focus of our investigation, even though in some sense they constitute self-services more clearly than anything else does.

Instead, we focus on the Resource Rooms that Centers have established, which typically provide a number of hard-copy and electronic resources and which are open to the public on a walk-in basis. These physical facilities are described in Chapter II, including tradeoffs that Centers make in configuring Resource Rooms to allow customers some privacy while retaining the flavor of an open and accessible space. We also detail in this chapter they types of hardware that is made available, including computers, copiers, fax machines, TVs for viewing videos, and phone banks.

Facilitating access is the topic addressed in Chapter III. Centers want to attract diverse customers to the Resource Room and publicize the tools that are available. Centers also find that most customers not only need an initial orientation to the facility, but will need help on an ongoing, if intermittent basis as well, for such things as figuring out how to use various software packages. If the continuum of the self-serve model thus begins with a customer accessing Web sites remotely from the home or office, the need that most Resource Room customers have for at least some staff assistance makes the point that the continuum shades off at the other end into staff-assisted services. We also discuss in this chapter provisions that some Centers have made for making their facilities and resources accessible to special populations, such as public assistance recipients or persons with disabilities, and we discuss their other strategies for facilitating access, such as establishing kiosks or other remote access points. Finally, we describe the ways Centers track customer usage and outcomes.

The importance of staff assistance for orienting customers to self-services leads to the conclusion that Resource Room staffing is essential to its effective operation. How Centers staff Resource Rooms, staff members' responsibilities, and the training they get are addressed in Chapter IV.

Exhibit I-1
Topics That Guided On-Site Data Collection

I. Topics Addressed with System Administrators, Planners, and Designers

- Goals and objectives of the self-service system.
- Interplay of state guidelines and discretion afforded local One-Stop Career Centers.
- Types of hardware/software used to deliver self-service tools and resources.
- How self-service Resource Rooms were designed (e.g., how physical layout was decided on, how decisions were made as to what tools/resources to include, etc.).
- How self-service facilities are staffed and how staff are trained.
- Types of resources/tools available and how decisions were made as to what products to make available.
- How tools/resources were developed, including ways in which products were customized/adapted to fit the needs of the local area and its customers.
- Intended target audience and projected levels of usage.
- Ways in which self-services are intended to be used by customers, including both job seekers and employers.
- Ways in which flexible access was promoted, including remote access.
- Ways in which tools and resources were made more accessible for customers with special needs (e.g., those with disabilities or with limited-English language proficiency).
- Assessment of the adequacy of the resources available, including the quality of the content and the quality of the design (e.g., degree to which it is flexible, user-friendly, includes relevant and accurate information, etc.).
- Balance struck between the efficiencies in self-service designs and the need/desire of customers for personalized attention.
- Perceptions of key features that make self-service systems and resources effective.
- Methods of monitoring customer usage and satisfaction.
- Assessment of customer satisfaction with the products and facilities.

II. Topics Addressed with Resource Room Staff

- Characteristics and background of staff, including familiarity with the self-service tools and resources and training received in their use.
- Participant volumes and flows and how they are tracked.
- Types of customers using self-service systems and their needs.
- Types of support or assistance routinely provided to customers (e.g., by way of orientation sessions, tours of the facilities, etc.).
- Types of support or assistance customers seek.
- Types of customers who seem to have the greatest ease or the greatest difficulty in using the self-service systems.
- Perceptions of the adequacy of the support provided to customers using self-service systems.
- Perceptions of the effectiveness/quality of the resources and tools made available.
- Perceptions of ways in which the self-service Center or its resources could be made more responsive to customer needs.
- Perceptions of additional resources or tools of benefit to customers.

III. Topics Addressed with Customers

- Intended objectives in accessing self-service tools and resources.
- How customers learned about the facilities.
- Tools and resources they have accessed.
- Frequency of usage (e.g., how many times they have used self-service tools and resources, how frequently they have used them, etc.).
- Assistance they received in using tools and resources from Center staff and adequacy of the assistance.
- Other services they have accessed from the One-Stop Career Center (e.g., are they also participating in group workshops or training, etc.).
- Evaluation of the quality of the content of each of the tools and resources they have used (e.g., is information useful, accurate, and of the type desired).
- Evaluation of the quality of the design (e.g., flexibility, ease of use, etc.).
- Suggestions for improvements to the self-service Center, such as tools or additional resources they would like to see made available.

Chapter V then goes to the heart of the Resource Room's functions by describing the resources and tools that are typically made available. This chapter makes clear that Centers are faced with a number of challenges in ensuring that resources and tools can be used effectively, and it describes some strategies that Centers have devised to overcome them.

Employers are intended to be an important customer of One-Stop Career Centers. But Centers face special challenges in devising self-services for this important constituency. Some of the strategies they have devised are described in Chapter VI.

Chapter VII presents a summary of the cross-site observations and draws some general conclusions. By way of providing some examples of whole systems, Appendix A then presents brief Project Profiles, which describe the major features of the Resource Rooms we visited.

Additional resources for the practitioner are presented in Appendix B. This appendix consists of a Resources List that includes guidance on where the practitioner might go for additional information on some of the topics we cover in this report, with the focus on resources that can be used to develop actionable steps. Excerpts from or copies of some of these resources are presented in Appendix D, which comes at the end of the Report. Meanwhile, Appendix C presents contact information for our study sites, should a practitioner wish to contact staff at one of our sites to learn a bit more about their practices that are described in this report.

II. FACILITIES AND DESIGNS

An important goal is ensuring that the layout of the Resource Room promotes ease of use and offers a welcoming environment.

From the outset, when the first One-Stop Career Centers were being created, states and their local sites indicated that they wanted their physical facilities to be tangible evidence—a visible symbol—of the new system and the ways in which this system was a significant improvement over the prior one. The external physical appearance of the facility that housed One-Stop Career Centers and the internal layout were thus given careful attention, particularly at the local level, to ensure that the design reflected the holistic goals and vision for all the services that were to be provided. Early goals as envisioned by state and local respondents were to create facilities that would be user-friendly, less "bureaucratic" in appearance, and designed for the easy access for all customers. By the early to mid-1990's, most of the study sites had gained some experience with providing at least limited self services at their One-Stop Centers or at other locations, such as those housing JTPA Title III services. The positive community response from those using the Resource Rooms—from job seekers, employed professionals, youth, and older workers—convinced One-Stop leadership in the study sites that the space, resources, and technology-based equipment should be expanded and enhanced. Between 1996 and 1998, study sites moved aggressively to expand their self-services and information resources by renovating the existing site or moving to a new location. These transformations allowed the Centers to provide more on-site office space for partners, but equally important, it provided the opportunity to update and expand the self-directed services provided in their Resource Rooms.

As a first step in the planning process, local sites, usually with support at the state level, developed strategies to ensure that all partners and relevant stakeholders could "have their say" to design the layout of the facilities, in particular those that would be incorporated into the self-service Resource Room. The feedback that was received through this process was used by decision makers to fine-tune their goals and to decide upon specific space-related features of the Center, such as the placement of customer meeting space and classrooms and staff offices, strategies to accommodate customer flow in the Resource

Room, and the placement of equipment (such as the banks of computers). Other considerations included elements that would improve the "ambiance" and attractiveness of the entire Center.

STATES' GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING SELF-SERVICE ENVIRONMENTS

States in which the local study sites were located typically established general guidelines and policies regarding design motifs or layouts to support self-services. These design elements, which were often developed with assistance from DOL-sponsored committees or technical assistance providers, were communicated to planners at the local level, who were directed to develop their self-service resource areas keeping universal design elements in mind, while also accommodating local needs and requirements. States also wanted to make certain that the range of customers would be adequately served, particularly those with special needs. (Please also refer to the chapter "Facilitating Access to Self-Services," which discusses these issues in more detail.)

General design guidelines issued by states include ensuring easy accessibility of the facilities and electronic access to on-line resources.

State One-Stop planners assisted local planners to develop facility designs in line with standard principles established by the state in a number of ways. For example, state representatives in Texas and Minnesota participated with local committees during the planning process. Indiana, Florida and Texas also identified some local Centers as models that incorporated design elements in line with state principles and guidelines (two of the state-designated models, the *Melbourne Job Link Center* in Florida and the *Capital of Texas Workforce Center* in Texas, were our study sites).

State guidelines critical to the design of Resource Rooms included the following:

- *Easy accessibility of the One-Stop Center.* The location of the Centers was chosen to provide accessibility for all populations, including professionals as well as job seekers who use public transportation.
- *Traffic flow.* An open design plan that would be easy to navigate, contiguous Resource Room areas, and a reception area that allows for unobtrusive monitoring of activities and use of Resource Room equipment was promoted.
- *Providing adequate electronic access.* All states

representing study sites required that local Centers provide customer access to the Internet and the state's job matching system.

- *Configuring space and electronic hardware to accommodate persons with disabilities.* Basic components for wheelchair accessibility included: easy entry into the building, users' ability to navigate comfortably within the Resource Room, and accessibility to all resources. The latter includes appropriate counter and hard-copy shelf heights, adequate lighting, and accessibility to work stations.
- *Application of external construction and internal design features* to dispel the image of a government building. This included such items as lighting, furnishings and use of colors and textures.

DEVELOPING FACILITIES TO SUPPORT SELF-SERVICE GOALS

"We want the Resource Room to be the center of the Center."
— An administrator with the Bloomington WDC

Local sites worked within these guidelines to ensure the adequacy of the resources and that all individuals would have access to valuable services. To do so, local site planners included in discussions those organizations and agencies that were advocates for targeted populations, such as State Services for the Blind, and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, as well as employer representatives. Though local exigencies were important, goals developed at each of the study sites were often quite similar, particularly with regard to the external look of the facility and the Resource Rooms. This section describes some of these local goals and how they were realized.

External Design Features and Facility Accessibility

Site planners wanted the location of the Center to be accessible to a wide range of customers. As a consequence, key considerations included accessibility within the community, the ease of entering the building for persons with disabilities, and a welcoming facade.

Facility location within the community. For those sites that were able to move to a new location, access by proximity to public transportation, the convergence of several major highways, and adequate free parking were important considerations. Sites that remained at their existing locations often found other creative ways to serve the universal customer.

- Brevard County, which spans a 72- mile area along the coast, located its Centers near major metropolitan areas. Because bus service is not available to some of the larger Centers, like the *Melbourne Job Link*, smaller Centers are located in public housing areas, where residents are less likely to own cars.

- At the *Bloomington Workforce Development Center* and the *Workforce Center of Anoka County* sites, the metropolitan bus-system schedule was modified to accommodate individuals using the Centers during business hours.
- The *Boston Work Place* is located near the city center, readily accessible via the subway system.

All Centers, as a minimum, must be ADA compliant.

Access for individuals with physical disabilities. All the study sites are wheelchair accessible. Some sites have combined a pleasing design with accessibility for disabled individuals. For example, while the *Capital of Texas Workforce Center* is not visible from the exterior entrance, individuals who need assistance entering the Center may press a "doorbell" that rings in the Center. Other Centers, including those in *Anoka*, *Racine* and *Melbourne,* have double door-wide entryways into the resource area. This design feature also contributes to a feeling of spaciousness.

Customers' first impressions of the Resource Room are important. Enabling passersby to "see-in" can serve to entice potential users.

A welcoming external facade. Replacing the "bureaucratic image" of the former Job Service or Unemployment Insurance office with a more professional look was an important consideration that was reflected not only in the Centers' internal designs, but in their external façades as well. Local One-Stop planners felt that the "look and feel" of the One-Stop facility from outside (or the entrance area when it was located within a building) were "first impressions" that initially influenced potential customers in important ways. Thus, floor to ceiling windows or glass windows with double glass doors were popular with site designers, because it allows individuals to "see in" to the resource area, while allowing staff the ability to assist those who may need help entering the building. Examples of sites with pleasing designs that have avoided the "government" look included the following:

- The *Racine Workforce Development Center* and the *Anoka County Workforce Center* are both located in multi-story facilities that house other human services offices, yet both buildings have pleasing modern exteriors with low steps leading to the front lobbies, set back from the parking lot.

- The *Boston Work Place* is located in a high rise office building among other professional offices.
- The *Capital of Texas Workforce Center*, in Austin, occupies 2 of the 3 floors of a modern building surrounded by trees. Large glass double doors allow the visitor to see the Center entrance (but not the interior of the Resource Room), and a large, colorful bulletin board just outside the entrance provides information about programs and services within the Center.
- The *Bloomington Workforce Development Center* is located in its own facility, a low, one-story building with glass doors and floor to ceiling windows.
- The *Melbourne Job Link Center* is located in the "elbow" of a one-story small strip mall. With its glass exterior, it allows individuals to view the resource area from the outside, revealing a layout much like a library.

Promoting Staff Accessibility

Staff play a crucial role in Resource Rooms. Configuring space to maximize staff efficiency is thus important.

As will be discussed in Chapter III, our study sites quickly learned that Center customers needed at least periodic staff assistance, to help them use resources effectively. At the same time, One-Stop managers often found it challenging to fund extra staff to assist universal customers who were not enrolled in categorically-funded programs. To balance these concerns, they developed various layout configurations to facilitate the efficiency with which staff could be used and ensure that they could serve in multiple functions. Examples of the configurations that appeared to work well for universal customers using the Resource Room included the following:

- *Combining Reception Areas and Help Desk functions*. Several sites were successful in combining the One-Stop Center's Reception Area and Resource Room Help Desk, by placing these functions together and strategically near both the entrances to the Center and the Resource Room.
  - At the *Melbourne Job Link Center*, the Reception/Help Desk counter can be seen from the glassed-in entrance. Staff assigned to this area greet visitors, monitor the Resource Room area, answer questions, and provide technical assistance with computers and software programs. They can also assist

individuals using the copier and fax machines as well as those using the telephones to contact employers.

- At the *Anoka County Workforce Center*, the Greeter's desk is situated near the entrance to the Resource Room. The Greeter may assist customers with brochures and general questions. Meanwhile, the computer technician, who is more likely to help users with their computer-based requirements, is located nearby, sitting behind a three-sided counter.
- At the *Austin Workforce Center*, a Greeter's desk is located behind the counter where customers log in on a computer. Two technical specialists have their desks behind the greeter and are available to assist all customers with hardware-related questions and tasks.

- *Help Desks that serve only Resource Room customers.* Several One-Stop Centers have placed Help Desks in the center of the Resource Room, in order to serve individuals in this area exclusively.
  - In the *Morrisville Career Resource Center*, the Help Desk divides two sections that serve universal customers. One side is reserved for Employment Service functions and has 5 computer terminals that are hooked up to statewide job listings and other resources. On the other side of the Help Desk are computer terminals with Internet access and hard copy resources, as well as assistive technology useful to individuals with disabilities.
  - The *Racine Workforce Development Center* Help Desk is located in the center of the Resource Room, which includes computer terminals and, off to one side, a resource library with comfortable chairs and tables.
  - The *Boston Work Place* Help Desk is located at the entrance to the Resource Library, and staff provide assistance to customers as needed.
- *"Professional" staff that serve Resource Room customers.* Several Centers configure offices in or very near the Resource Room to accommodate staff who both serve the general public and carry out more

specialized functions.

- The *Bloomington Workforce Development Center* has several counselors' offices located in the Resource Area. These counselors assist individuals with using computers, but they also provide counseling and testing and assessment services.
- The *Austin Workforce Center* has placed three ES counselors in offices adjacent to the Resource Room, so that they can assist customers with job matches and other job search activities.

Location and Layout of the Resource Room

All sites attempted to place the Resource Room in sight of, or near, the front entrance. Sites that had prior experience with resource areas located on another floor or in rooms adjacent to the main Center area indicated that it had been difficult to maintain staff adequate to assist Resource Room users and to monitor the use of the equipment in those areas. Planners indicated that placement of the Resource Room near the Center entrance was also important to help in attracting customers to try out the self-services that were available. Taking this principle even further, some Centers ensured that the Resource Room was visible from the street, behind large floor-to-ceiling windows

A balance must be struck between providing "openness" while making provisions for privacy and intimacy.

When space was available, Centers designated rooms for special services where privacy was required or the noise level might otherwise be distracting. Sites that lacked the luxury of having separate space to house separate self-service functions needed to make optimal use of the one large area that was available. In this case, they often designed the layout so that activities requiring concentration or a low noise level were placed in corners, or their own cubicles. They also ensured that areas most used by the general public would be in the front area—easily accessible—with meeting and classrooms near or behind the Resource Room, and staff offices on the perimeter or in the section further to the back of the building.

Designing Resource Rooms to be User-Friendly and Professional

Study sites all wanted to create an atmosphere for the Resource Room, and the Center as a whole, that was different from the previous system, considered by job seekers and employers alike to be unfriendly, difficult to access, and a place where, as one individual

The metaphor of the

termed it, "you had to park your dignity outside the door."

Resource Room as "like a library" was commonly expressed.

Some successful attempts at changing that image have already been discussed, such as incorporating creative external physical features using glass, and using layouts that place Greeters and receptionists near the entrance to the Resource Rooms. The descriptive phrase most often used by sites was that they wanted their Resource Room to be like a modern library. Some sites incorporated this concept into the design of their self-service areas in the following ways.

- *Furnishings*. The *Bloomington Workforce Development Center* and *Racine Workforce Development Center* both included a few comfortable upholstered chairs and sofas near a small table, with lamps that made it easy for customers to read newspapers or brochures while they waited for a counselor. Small round tables with padded chairs were used by other sites to dispel the institutional look.
- *Windows and lighting fixtures.* To the extent possible, sites attempted to incorporate large windows or glass walls facing exterior plantings or trees. Indirect lighting was also frequently used. *Racine Workforce Development Center* replaced a wall with windows, allowing light to enter and giving customers a view to the outside.
- *Pleasing colors and motivational wall posters*. Most Centers used a combination of light blue, gray and green with maroon accents and buff walls. Posters and prints were carefully selected to enhance the colors, and offsets were used for glassed-in bulletin boards or signs.

Developing an enticing environment where customers feel comfortable means using attractive decor, comfortable furnishings, and ample lighting.

Other features incorporated into the Resource Room and One-Stop design emphasized a non-bureaucratic approach; designers wanted to move away from the "take a number and wait" image. The placement of the reception desk and greeters near the Center entrance, for example, was meant to be a gentle reminder for Resource Room customers to sign in and that assistance was available. The *Bloomington Workforce Development Center* was considering installing an electric eye at the entrance to the Resource Room, obviating the need for a sign-in clipboard.

Other subtle layout service features, covered in more detail in

***The Resource Center Development Guide**, listed in the Resource List in Appendix B, provides excellent guidance in* other chapters, are designed to help individuals feel comfortable within the self-service atmosphere by creating an atmosphere of inclusiveness. For example, several Centers have "Kids Spaces" with small tables, chairs, and a few books and toys, signaling to parents that children are allowed. Facilitative equipment for those with disabilities or other special needs were also provided, as is discussed more fully in the chapter to follow.

effective design principles.

Examples of Designs that Facilitate Accessibility

The *Racine Workforce Development Center's* Resource Room combines pleasant surroundings with good design. The Help Desk is located in the center of the Resource Room, allowing staff to monitor all parts of the Room as well as to easily assist customers who ask for, or who may appear to need, assistance. The Room is also designed as a comfortable working environment, with 21 computers located in an area separate from a resource library comprised of publications, books and periodicals. Two other rooms located nearby consist of the Career Development Center, which houses resources on assessment and career exploration and 4 personal computers, and the Academic Improvement Center, which is a satellite campus of a local technical college with computers with instructional programs that allow customers to work in a self-paced environment to improve their basic academic and computer skills.

The *Anoka County Workforce Center's* Resource Room provides a range of information, resources, and services in one large area. Computers located in the center of the area are identified as "Computers for Job Listings," near the ES staff desk that assists with job matches. As one enters the area, customers may use computers for resume and cover letter writing, career information and keyboard training. Copy and fax machines are located in an area off to one site of the Resource Room, near video monitors that have headphones. Three rooms with windows into the larger resource area consist of an area for making phone calls, a testing room, and a Job Club room. Offices located in the back of the Center are used by a dislocated worker counselor, an Educational Opportunity Center staff person (who provides assessment and education related services), and the supervisor for the resource area. The décor—gray and blue with touches of maroon, windows that provide a view of the trees outside, and plants— enhances the room's quiet, professional atmosphere.

III. FACILITATING ACCESS TO SELF-SERVICES

The One-Stop Centers in this study indicated that their goal was to design a Resource Room that was accessible, user-friendly, comfortable, and responsive to customer needs. Centers also stressed that they seek to empower job seeker customers to direct their own job search. However, in order to encourage customers to adopt a self-directed approach to utilizing services and resources, Centers have recognized the importance of facilitating access to self-services. Thus, in addition to designing physical facilities that promote access to self-services, which we discuss in Chapter II, and providing a broad array of self-services tools and resources that meets customer needs, which is discussed in Chapter V, One-Stop Centers have found that a key component of building a solid self-service system is designing mechanisms that help facilitate access to self-services.

This chapter explores a variety of strategies used by the Centers in this study to facilitate access to self-services. Consistent with the theme of promoting universal access to services, Centers have developed marketing efforts to attract customers into the Resource Room. Once customers enter the Resource Room, however, there must also be mechanisms in place that help them navigate the array of self-service tools and resources that are available. Centers have also discovered that customers benefit from more detailed guidelines for using specific self-services, such as instructions for accessing job search information on the Internet.

Building an effective Resource Room requires that provisions be made to facilitate access. This can entail marketing of Center services, providing staff assistance, being responsive to customers with special needs, and providing remote access

In attempting to promote access for a diverse range of customers, Centers have also made accommodations to meet the unique needs of certain customer groups. In this chapter we discuss efforts that Centers in this study have developed to promote access to the Resource Room among five different population groups: individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited computer skills, participants in welfare-to-work programs, youth customers, and non-native English speakers. A few Centers have also sought to promote access to self-services by providing opportunities for customers to access services remotely. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of strategies to document the performance of the self-service system.

ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS TO THE RESOURCE ROOM

Traditionally, public workforce development and labor exchange systems have been perceived as serving primarily entry-level and hourly workers and their employers. However, the Centers in this study, like most One-Stop systems, expressed a desire to attract a diverse range of job seekers and employer customers, including both large and small employers and workers with a wide range of formal education and skills. As a result, One-Stop Centers have had to develop marketing and outreach mechanisms to attract an expanded customer base.

Centers need to consciously devise strategies to recruit a diverse range of customers.

In an effort to attract customers to the Resource Room, One-Stop systems have rarely marketed self-services as a stand-alone feature. Rather, at the local level, most sites advertise the range of services provided at the Center, including self, assisted, and intensive services. Many Centers also offer a broad array of assisted services at no cost to universal customers, such as workshops or individual meetings with a career counselor, and tend to market these services jointly with the self-services available in the Resource Room. Also helpful, however, are statewide marketing campaigns focused on particular self-service resources. For example, many states have developed brochures promoting the state One-Stop Internet web page or the state Job Bank.

This section provides a discussion of marketing efforts to attract individual job seekers and employers to the Resource Room.

Attracting Individual Job Seekers

Centers conducted two broad types of outreach to attract individual job seekers: (1) marketing to the general public, and (2) outreach to targeted populations.

Marketing to the General Public. As Centers have increasingly tried to attract a broad range of customers to utilize self-services and other resources available to universal customers, they have had to develop new marketing strategies geared toward the general public. Although some Centers rely largely upon "word of mouth" marketing to increase general public awareness of the One-Stop system, a couple of the One-Stop Centers in this study have conducted elaborate, aggressive marketing such as television and newspaper advertisements. Different approaches that Centers used to reach a broad range of potential customers included the following:

- *Advertisements in public media.* Two Centers have placed advertisements in public media such as newspaper or television. The Workforce Development Center in *Racine, Wisconsin* has advertised its Orientation workshop in the local newspaper and television stations. In addition, the Sunday newspaper contains a listing of all workshops that will be held at the Center during the upcoming week.
- *Internet web page.* The web page for a local One-Stop system often provides general information about services and programs. In *Brevard County, Florida*, for example, the web page for Brevard Job Link includes a description of the services and resources available through the local One-Stop system, a list of Center locations, and links to several resources, such as job listings and labor market information.
- *Kiosks.* Some states or local systems have installed kiosks in central community locations such as public libraries or shopping malls that provide general information about the One-Stop system. In some cases kiosks also provide direct access to self-services such as job listings. In *Vermont*, the state Department of Employment and Training (DET) has installed several kiosks in highly visible areas such as shopping malls. The kiosks have a touchscreen and a voice prompt system that provide information on the mission of DET, job listings, labor market information, services for job seekers, services for employers, and UI services.
- *Brochures.* Most Centers have developed brochures that describe the array of services, resources, and programs accessible through the One-Stop system.
- *Videos.* A few Centers, including the Workforce Development Center in *Racine, Wisconsin,* have developed videos designed to promote the local One-Stop system to job seekers and employers.
- *Job Fairs.* Several Centers indicate they attract job seekers by participating in local job fairs. Staff from the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center in southern *Austin, Texas* regularly attend job fairs and distribute promotional items including brochures, pens, and key chains with the Center's address and logo.

Broad-based marketing approaches have included media ads, kiosks, videos, and participation in Job Fairs.

Sample pages from Brevard's Job Link web site are included in Appendix D.

Some Centers have been reluctant to conduct broad-scale marketing efforts, however, sometimes out of fear that the Center does not currently have the capacity to adequately serve a larger customer base or because the local One-Stop system is still evolving. Since these Centers typically rely on informal "word of mouth" marketing and referrals from partner agencies to attract customers to the Resource Room, they tend to serve a high percentage of customers eligible for specialized programs. At a couple of Centers, job seekers that had heard about the local One-Stop through "word of mouth" expressed high praise for the One-Stop Center, but were frustrated that the Center's services were not more broadly advertised. As sites move ahead with implementation of the Workforce Investment Act, marketing efforts geared toward the general public may increase, since additional funding should be available to provide services for universal customers.

Referrals from partner agencies and "word of mouth" are among the most commonly cited recruitment methods.

Marketing and Outreach to Targeted Populations. All of the Centers in this study conduct some form of outreach to attract individuals from certain population groups into the Resource Room. Most Centers have established referral linkages or co-location agreements to encourage participants in specialized programs—such as dislocated worker, welfare-to-work or vocational rehabilitation programs—to use the resources and tools available in the Resource Room. Centers have also attempted to attract individuals from certain population groups, such as youth customers, by arranging special tours or presentations. In some cases, these outreach efforts are undertaken to help counteract a perception that the One-Stop Center is not really designed for universal access. For example, one Center has been perceived as primarily serving a more highly educated, professional customer base, and has had to work closely with local agencies to attract participants in welfare-to-work programs.

Outreach targeted to specific population groups has included conducting tours, using targeted mailings, linking with other organizations, and using the Center as a community meeting space.

Centers used the following approaches to attract customers from targeted groups to the Resource Room:

- *Referral linkages with One-Stop partners.* Most of the Centers in this study have established strong referral linkages with One-Stop partner agencies. Program participants are especially likely to utilize the Resource Room when program staff members are co-located at the One-Stop Center.
- *Linkages with other systems or community-based organizations.* Some Centers have established

linkages with other workforce development systems, such as school-to-work, or with community based organizations. For example, in *Anoka, MN*, the Workforce Center is the administrative entity for the county's school-to-work initiative.

- *Presentations.* One-Stop staff may make presentations at local schools or community organizations to increase awareness of the Center.
- *Targeted mailings.* In *Austin, TX* mailings have been generated from the Center's database system. For example, the Center recently produced a bulk mailing for customers over 55, alerting them to community resources for senior citizens and reminding them about services and resources available at the Center.
- *Tours.* Many Centers organize special tours for certain groups such as youth or participants in welfare-to-work programs.
- *Serving as a community meeting space*. Some Centers attract customers to the Resource Room by serving as a community meeting space. In *Racine, Wisconsin*, for example, the Workforce Development Center hosts ESL courses several evenings during the week.

Marketing Efforts to Attract Job Seekers to One-Stop Centers

The *Workforce Development Center (WDC)* in *Racine, WI* has advertised its Orientation Workshop on local television stations and in the newspaper. The Sunday newspaper contains a complete listing of all workshops that will take place at the WDC during the upcoming week. The WDC also attracts customers by serving as a community meeting place. Each month, for example, the WDC hosts blood pressure screenings for the community. Outreach efforts geared toward specific populations include tours for high school students. The Center also offers ESL and Citizenship classes, which also serve to increase awareness of Center services.

The *Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South)* in *Austin, TX* has advertised the Center through public service announcements on local television stations and by distributing brochures and items such as key chains and pens bearing the Center's logo and address. The Center also conducts outreach efforts targeting specific populations. Participants in a local program to assist offenders with reintegration into the community receive a brochure and are referred to the Center for job search assistance. Center staff members regularly give presentations on the Center in local schools and community centers.

Attracting Employer Customers to the One-Stop Center

Employers rarely 'flow' into One-Stop Centers with the same frequency as individual job seekers, as we discuss further in Chapter VI. To the extent that employers utilize self-access services, including state and national web sites such as America's Job Bank and America's Talent Bank, or database systems with labor market information, these resources are often accessed using an Internet connection from their own office rather than visiting a One-Stop Center. When employers do visit Centers it is typically to conduct recruiting sessions in the Resource Room or as a guest speaker at "Meet the Employer" sessions, both of which might be construed as "self-service" activities.

Familiarizing employers with Center services requires special efforts. These have included "Meet the Employer" Sessions, workshops for employers, and Resource Rooms designated specifically for employers' use.

Across the eight Centers in this study, approaches used to attract employers to the One-Stop Center included the following:

- *Recruitment sessions*. Several Centers have linkages with employers that regularly use the One-Stop Center as a recruiting site.
- *"Meet the Employer" sessions*. In *Renton, Washington*, the weekly "Job Seekers' Exchange" workshop has become quite popular among job seekers and local employers. Local employers are invited to speak about job search strategies, such as interviewing skills and resume tips. Employer customers often attend these sessions, even when they are not featured as a guest speaker, in order to conduct informal recruiting activities.
- *Workshops for employers*. The Workforce Development Center in *Racine, Wisconsin* offers a variety of seminars for employer customers on topics such as recruitment, strategic planning, and diversity in the workplace.
- *Employer Resource Rooms*. In *Bloomington, Indiana*, the Workforce Development Center plans to develop a separate Employer Information Resource Area adjacent to the Job Seeker Information Resource Area, which may increase the flow of employer customers into the Center.

ORIENTING CUSTOMERS TO THE SELF-SERVICE SYSTEM

Although self-access services are designed to be utilized independently, most of the Centers in this study emphasized that one of the key lessons they learned was the importance of providing customers with an orientation to the Resource Room and guidance around using self-services. Respondents at the local and state levels indicated that they initially believed that a majority of customers would access self-services on their own—self-services was viewed as a stand-alone feature requiring little staff assistance. One Center manager commented that during the planning and initial implementation phases, One-Stop partners adopted a mindset of "if we build it, customers will use it." Over time, however, most Centers have discovered that a high degree of customer service, as well as outreach, must be provided to facilitate utilization of self-services.

Once they enter the Resource Room, customer need guidance on the available resources and tools.

Thus, several Centers in this study have consistently increased the number of customer service staff available to assist customers in the Resource Room. These staff members ensure that customers effectively utilize self-services through individualized assistance or group workshops. The sentiment that "self-services is a misnomer," was echoed by virtually all of the Centers included in this study. According to staff members of the Career Development Center in *Renton, Washington*, "we quickly learned that a beautiful facility with state-of-the-art technology will be under-utilized without staff available to assist customers. If people feel intimidated or don't see that help is readily available, they won't use the self-service features." Our observations confirmed this. During our visits to the Resource Rooms, we routinely witnessed customers requesting staff assistance. Because the individuals using the Resource Room have varying levels of comfort, experience, and expertise with the tools and resources available, providing staff assistance and other mechanisms to orient customers to self-services is critical.

Centers in our study have learned that providing some staff assistance is essential to making the self-service resources accessible to customers.

"We quickly learned that a beautiful facility... will be under-utilized without staff ...to assist customers."
— a Center administrator

In this section we discuss the variety of mechanisms Centers use to provide customers with an orientation to the One-Stop Center and to specific self-services.

Orienting Customers to the Center

Once individuals enter the One-Stop Center, sites varied as to how they provide customers with an orientation. Most Centers have designated "Greeters" who welcome visitors and request that they sign-in using a hard-copy or computer registry. Some Centers offer a tour of the One-Stop to all new customers when they first arrive—either a brief overview of the Resource Room and services available, or, in some cases, an extensive private orientation to the One-Stop Center. Some Centers offer an orientation workshop once or twice each week,

"Self services is a misnomer. Users need assistance."
— a Center administrator

Many Centers use

but often give new customers a brief tour of the facility and encourage them to attend the orientation session.

Greeters to provide an introduction to the Center; others hold general orientation workshops a few times a week.

Centers used a variety of mechanisms to orient customers to the Resource Room and varied significantly in the amount of resources they devoted to customer service. Their strategies included:

- *General orientation workshops* held at scheduled times once or twice each week. These orientation workshops typically include a tour of the Resource Room and other self-service areas and an overview of the different services available to customers—self, assisted, and specialized services. Some Centers also provide an extensive tour to all new customers on an individual basis.
- *Appropriate signage.* Clear, visible signage directs customers to the location of resources—books, computer programs, Internet access, labor market information, terminals with state job listings. This is particularly important when all of the computers do not have the same assortment of programs on the desktop. The Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* has two separate banks of computers, with large blue signs attached to the ceiling identifying the resources that can be accessed. One section has seventeen computers for "resume, cover letter writing, career information and keyboard training," while another section has eleven computers with "job listings."

Clear signage is also an essential tool for orienting customers to what is available.

- *Brochures,* floor plans, or information flyers describing services and resources available at the Center. For example, Centers with multiple self-service areas, such as a separate Resource Library and computer area, generally include a map of the self-service areas to help acquaint customers with the resources available to universal customers at various locations within the Center.
- *Registration kiosks* usually provide customers with general information about One-Stop services—self, guided, and intensive—and how they can access those services and resources.
- *A video* that introduces customers to the One-Stop concept and the services available to universal customers. In *Brevard County, Florida*, the weekly orientation session at the Melbourne Job Link Center concludes with a twelve-minute video describing Job Link and the services and resources available.
- *Television monitors* that continuously scroll a list of

services, resources, or events at the One-Stop Center. For example, in *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center has a 26-inch monitor that continuously scrolls the resources available in the Resource Center in large typeface.

- *An Internet Web page* for the local One-Stop Center sometimes includes a basic description of the type of services and resources available, along with links to specific self-services.

Information kiosks or television monitors in the reception area are useful in providing a quick introduction to Center services. Internet web pages can also provide a good overview. For an example, see sample pages from Brevard's Job Link web page, in Appendix D.

Examples of Orienting Customers to One-Stop Resources

At the *Workforce Center* in *Anoka, Minnesota*, a Greeter welcomes customers and requests that they sign-in. To familiarize new customers with the Center's resources and services, an *individualized tour*, lasting about an hour, is given by the Greeter, Resource Room technician, or program counselor, depending upon who is available at the time. While waiting for the orientation, customers may view a 26-inch *television monitor* located near the entrance that scrolls the specific services and resources available at the Center. A large *bulletin board* is also located near the entrance, with a monthly calendar of upcoming events, a diagram of the Center indicating the location of particular resources, and announcements regarding workshops and services. A *brochure* describing the self-services, workshops, and intensive services available at the Center also includes a map of the Center and lists the names and telephone numbers of staff of particular programs. A *monthly calendar* of workshops and recruitment sessions is also available. Finally, a more *intensive, two-day orientation* to the Resource Room, required for participants in certain programs, is also open to universal customers.

The Work Place (TWP) in *Boston, Massachusetts* has instituted a membership system using swipe cards with a bar code. TWP has several receptionists that greet customers, encourage new customers to complete a membership application, and give *brief tours* of the Center. New customers view an eight-minute, closed-captioned *orientation video* with general information about services available to universal customers at no cost as well as fee-based services. The video is available in several languages, including Mandarin, Vietnamese, French, and Spanish. Customers can learn about guided-services, such as workshops on self-services, through *informational flyers* displayed throughout the Center or from TWP's *web page*.

Additional Examples of Orienting Customers

The *Workforce Development Center (WDC)* in *Racine, Wisconsin* has developed several mechanisms to orient customers to the range of services available. At the entrance to the WDC are three touch-screen *registration kiosks* that provide customers with basic information about the Center's services and resources. The kiosks have English and Spanish templates, and can be accessed through a voice prompt or touch screen format. By entering their social security number, customers can register for an appointment with a career counselor or for one of the WDC's many workshops—services that are available at no cost to universal customers. Customers can also register for services and obtain general information about the Center from Greeters at the *reception desk*. Each Monday the Center offers a *WDC Orientation Workshop*, a two-hour overview of self, guided, and specialized services available at the WDC and a tour of the self-services areas on the first floor. The WDC publishes a *monthly calendar* of workshops, as well as a *brochure* on the WDC that includes a map of the self-service areas.

Customers need an orientation not only to the Center as a whole, but to specific resources and tools.

Orienting Customers to Specific Self-Service Resources

Once customers enter the Resource Room, what mechanisms exist to facilitate usage of particular self-services? While an orientation workshop, video, or brochure may furnish the customer with a general overview of self-service resources, customers may want more in-depth guidelines around accessing specific resources. For example, customers with little experience or comfort using computers may require detailed instructions or staff assistance using particular resources, such as a resume writing program or an electronic assessment and career exploration program. While resources and tools are discussed further in Chapter V, in this section we discuss the different strategies adopted by One-Stop Centers to orient customers to specific self-service resources.

Mechanisms to orient job seekers can include print materials, Internet "bookmarks," workshops, computer tutorials, and staff assistance.

Most Centers have developed a variety of mechanisms to help customers navigate particular self-service resources. This assistance might include print materials, workshops on using specific software, Internet "bookmarks" that direct customers to job search web sites, or even something as simple as a list of different programs available at a computer work station. In addition, most Centers also provide customer service staff in the Resource Room on a full-time basis. In this regard, self-services were rarely viewed as a stand-alone feature.

Print Materials. Many Centers have developed print materials to help orient customers to specific self-services. For example, the

Career Development Center in *Renton, Washington* has developed three different informational flyers pertaining to preparing and sending an electronic resume. In *Boston, Massachusetts*, The Work Place has prepared informational flyers with step-by-step instructions on "how to save text from an Internet web page," "how to save a document on diskette," and other topics. These print materials help simplify access to self-services by providing customers with clear instructions or guidelines. In contrast, several Centers do not offer written instructions for accessing resume writing or career exploration and assessment programs, which may help explain why they have had to provide extensive staff assistance to customers using these programs.

The Career Development Center in Renton WA has developed an annotated list of Internet bookmarks. See the Resource List in Appendix D for excerpts.

Internet "bookmarks." While the Internet contains a wide variety of resources and information to assist job seekers, One-Stop customers could easily feel overwhelmed trying to track down helpful information and may spend significant amounts of time "spinning their wheels" while "surfing" the Internet. To help guide customers to noteworthy web sites on the Internet, several Centers have created Internet "bookmarks." This generally requires that staff conduct research to discover helpful web sites at the local, state, and national levels. In *Renton, Washington*, the Career Development Center has created almost one hundred Internet "bookmarks," categorized under different topic areas such as "best bets" and "Washington State resources." Customers can obtain a hard-copy list of these web sites in an annotated bibliography format, with brief descriptions of each web site.

Free, open-access workshops are given in many Centers on a range of topics, including how to use the Internet, job search strategies, and career exploration.

Workshops. As a form of assisted or guided services, many Centers have developed workshops that enable customers to gain a deeper understanding of particular self-services, such as the Internet or a resume writing program. All of the Centers in this study offer a variety of workshops that are open to universal customers. However, Centers did vary considerably regarding the extent to which the content of workshops focuses on self-services. Half of the Centers in this study offer at least three workshops that provide universal customers with guidance around using self-services. The following workshops were offered by at least two of the eight Centers in this study:

- Using the Internet as a job search tool.
- Job search strategies, including information on accessing labor market information and step-by-step instructions on registering for the state Job Service

When asked to assess thei

database.

- Resume workshops, which often walk customers through the process of creating a resume using a template program such as *WinWay*.
- Career exploration workshop, including orientation to electronic career exploration and self-assessment programs such as *Sigi Plus* or *Choices*.

experiences in the Resource Room, customers in one focus group responded that "the staff is great."

Staff Assistance. The extent to which Centers provide customer service staff available to assist customers in the Resource Room depended upon several factors, including the size of the Center, the degree of customer traffic in the Resource Room, and funding and partnership arrangements. In addition, Centers have different visions around what types of staffing arrangements are appropriate for a self-service environment. One Center in our study did not have staff members in the Resource Room whose primary duties included assisting customers. At the other end of the spectrum, one Center provides two chairs at each computer workstation in order to emphasize that staff members are available to assist customers. Most Centers in this study fall in the middle of this continuum, and have designated staff workstations within the Resource Room, such as a "Help Desk," so that customers know that staff are available to provide assistance.

Brevard FL's Workplace Organizer is available at each computer work-station to provide customers with guidance on using each software package. See the Resources List in Appendix B for information about this.

Guide to computer programs. To help orient customers to the many different computer programs available in the Resource Room, some Centers have developed hard-copy resources that guide customers through specific programs. In *Renton, Washington* , the Career Development Center offers a three-page flyer describing the computer resources available at the Center—Internet access, the state Job bank, Microsoft software programs, self-assessment software, and computer tutorials. In *Brevard County, Florida* the Job Link system has developed a "Workforce Organizer"—a white binder placed at each computer station that provides customers with guidance around using different self-service resources, such as the Internet, job listings, and resume writing programs.

Resource Room users who are novices in the use of computers will need computer tutorials.

Computer tutorials or computer courses. Some Centers have made arrangements to provide tutorials, workshops, videos, or courses in basic computer usage for customers with little computer experience. This allows customers to develop the requisite computer skills to fully access electronic self-services.

PROMOTING UNIVERSAL ACCESS FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF CUSTOMERS

While Centers need to conduct outreach to attract customers to their doors and need to provide orientation and staff assistance to make the resources accessible, they also have found that they need to make other accommodations to meet the special needs many customers have. For example, in contrast to older-style UI/ES offices that focus on the needs of unemployed job seekers, customers in the new workforce development environment will include those who are already employed in a 9 to 5 job, but who are looking to secure a better position. These individuals will not be well served by Centers that adhere to regular business office hours. Similarly, some customers will be parents of young children with child-care constraints; others will have limited English proficiency; and so on.

Accommodations also need to be made for special populations, such as extended hours for those working during the day and on-site child care for job seekers who are parents.

Centers have devised a variety of strategies to meet these needs:

- *Extended hours*. Three of the eight Centers included in this study have extended hours during evenings or weekends to facilitate access to self-services for customers that cannot visit the Center during normal business hours. Many other Centers are also considering offering extended hours.
- *On-site child care*. One Center has a child play area with a full-time staff person that is available to universal customers (this is not a licensed child care facility, however). Three other sites have a designated child play area without staff supervision or provide childcare for customers enrolled in specialized programs.
- *Customer service*. As discussed above in the section on "Orienting Customers to the Self-Service system," most Centers have found that providing a high degree of customer service—particularly having staff members in the Resource Room—is critical to facilitating usage of self-services.
- *Effective, efficient design of Resource Room*. As discussed in Chapter II, some Centers have modified the design of the Resource Room in order to improve access to self-services.

Usage can also be promoted if Centers design Resource Room tools and resources effectively. The Handbook of Usability Principles *and* Design Principles for Resource Center Development *both can be invaluable tools in this effort. See the Resource List in the Appendix for further details.*

While Centers make these accommodations to serve a diverse range of customers in their Resource Room, many have also focused

Additional provisions may be necessary to accommodate on conducting special outreach efforts to one or two unique population groups, such as youth customers or participants in welfare-to-work programs. In many instances, special outreach was spurred by state policy that encourages or mandates that One-Stop Centers take steps to promote access among special population groups. For example, state welfare reform legislation may stipulate that participants in welfare-to-work programs should conduct job search efforts in One-Stop Centers. Similarly, a few statewide initiatives attempt to promote access to One-Stop Centers among individuals with disabilities.

As we discuss further in this section, then, Centers have adopted a variety of approaches to promote access to the Resource Room among individuals from population groups with significant barriers to employment.

- *Most Centers provide some accommodations to promote access to self-services among individuals with disabilities.* Several Centers provide adaptive equipment that enables customers with hearing, vision, or mobility impairments to access self-service resources. (However, Centers with assistive technology often report that this equipment is rarely used.)
- *Ensuring that individuals with low basic skills, particularly low computer skills, have access to self-services represents a significant challenge for the One-Stop system.* Most of the One-Stop Centers in this study serve a predominantly high-skilled, highly-educated group of customers such as dislocated workers. Serving less educated groups will require special efforts.
- *Participants in welfare-to-work programs* often receive a customized orientation to the Resource Room. In some states, welfare-to-work participants are required to utilize One-Stop Centers as part of their job search activities.
- A few Centers conduct outreach efforts or tailor services to attract *youth customers.*
- *Promoting access among non-native English speakers represents a significant challenge.* The most common efforts to improve access for non-native English speakers have been to make some of the orientation materials available in multiple languages.

Individuals with Disabilities

- *Customers with disabilities*
- *Those with weak basic skills or limited computer literacy*
- *Public assistance recipients*
- *Youth*
- *Limited-English speakers*

Many Centers go beyond being ADA compliant by making a range of assistive technology available. The Trace

Research and Development Center at the Univ. of Wisconsin provides information about such tools. See the Resource List in the Appendix for contact information.

A majority of the One-Stop Centers included in this study have attempted to promote access to self-services among individuals with disabilities. The most extensive efforts include the provision of adaptive equipment and strong referral or co-location linkages with organizations serving the disability community. At a minimum, Centers ensure that they meet basic requirements outlined in the ADA regarding physical access and also offer some type of adaptive equipment such as a TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf) or text enlargement software for customers with visual impairments.

In some cases, statewide initiatives have required or encouraged Centers to take steps to promote access to One-Stop services among individuals with disabilities. In *Vermont*, the Vermont Assistive Technology Project used funding from the U.S. Department of Education to promote system changes by purchasing and installing a variety of assistive technology at each of the twelve One-Stop Centers in the state. This equipment addresses three types of disabilities—hearing, visual, and mobility impairments. In *Wisconsin*, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is researching various technologies that enable individuals with disabilities to access the state's JobNet system. DWD has developed workstations equipped with a variety of adaptive technology. A liaison at DWD serves as an advisor to One-Stop Centers regarding equipment, layout, and staffing for these special JobNet workstations. In *Texas*, the One-Stop certification process includes some items related to making services accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Centers can conduct a self-evaluation of their accommodations for meeting the needs of those with disabilities by consulting the One-Stop Disability Checklist, prepared by DOL. See the Resource List in Appendix for further details.

Across the eight sites included in this study, efforts to promote access to self-services among individuals with disabilities included the following strategies:

- *Making content of self-services relevant to individuals with disabilities* provides customers with information relevant to employment and disability. This might include the acquisition of books, periodicals, videos and other resources containing information on issues such as the ADA and Vocational Rehabilitation Act or how to discuss accommodation requirements with employers. In *Boston, Massachusetts*, The Work Place provides Internet "bookmarks" of websites that focus on disability issues. (In general, however, ensuring that the *content* of self-service resources is relevant to individuals with disabilities was not a

Efforts to promote access

common practice at the Centers in this study.)

- *Providing resources in alternative formats* ensures that customers with disabilities have equal opportunity to access services. In *Indiana*, the state Department of Workforce Development has developed a workbook in Braille concerning skills that are needed in the workplace, which is available at the *Bloomington* Workforce Development Center. In *Renton, Washington*, staff members have made adjustments to some of the print materials to make them more accessible to customers with learning disabilities.
- *Having referral linkages* with Vocational Rehabilitation and community-based organizations serving the disability community increases customer flow to the One-Stop Center. Such linkages are strongest when formalized in MOUs and when staff members are co-located at the One-Stop Center. In *Morrisville, Vermont*, the Career Resources Center and Vocational Rehabilitation have established a cooperative agreement to provide services for DVR customers at the Center. The Workforce Development Center in *Bloomington, Indiana* has established a linkage with a shelter for individuals with developmental disabilities. A staff person from the shelter, the Job Coach, brings groups to the WDC and assists individuals using resources in the Center's Information Resource Area.
- *Staff assistance and orientation to self-services*, provided by staff or partners with a special knowledge of the needs of customers with disabilities, increases utilization of self-services among individuals with disabilities. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, eight counselors from the Department of Rehabilitative Services work in the same building as the Workforce Center and frequently bring customers to the Resource Center to assist them in using self-services. In *Renton, Washington*, a counselor from IAM CARES, an agency providing rehabilitation services, is co-located at the Career Development Center on a full-time basis and regularly assists customers in accessing self-services. Some Centers have arrangements so that staff providing rehabilitation services are available on an "on-call" basis.
- *Staff training on disability* increases awareness and sensitivity to the unique issues facing individuals with disabilities. In *Renton, Washington*, staff members of the Career Development Center receive periodic training about learning disabilities. In *Texas*, a

for those with disabilities have also included developing strong linkages with Voc Rehab, providing staff training on assistive technology, and promoting staff awareness.

representative from the Texas Workforce Commission held meetings with local One-Stop staff regarding accommodations and services for job seekers with disabilities.

- *Periodic review of the Center's services to customers with disabilities* provides the Center with an opportunity to evaluate current efforts to promote access to self-services and develop a plan to improve access. In *Renton, Washington*, the Career Development Center created a cross-functional team composed of management, case managers, and Resource Room staff to explore strategies to promote access to self-directed services. This team used the U.S. DOL One-Stop disability checklist to review accessibility issues.

In addition to the strategies discussed above, many Centers provide adaptive equipment or other accommodations designed to improve access to One-Stop services among individuals with one or more of the following disabilities:

- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Mobility impairments
- Cognitive or language impairments.

Promoting Access for Customers with Physical Impairments. Although Centers in this study indicate that their building meets basic ADA requirements regarding physical accessibility, they also recognize that numerous accommodations could be made to improve access for customers with mobility impairments. At some Centers, the reception counter or registration desk was not accessible to persons using wheelchairs. In several instances, print materials on bookshelves or display racks were far too high to allow wheelchair access. These examples illustrate that the physical layout of the Resource Room may not allow customers with physical impairments to access self-services without special assistance. By contrast:

- In *Austin, Texas*, physical facility changes were made at the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) based upon the review and audit as part of the state's One-Stop certification process. The reception counter was lowered to accommodate customers in wheelchairs. At the entrance to the building near the ramp, a doorbell is prominently displayed that rings the Center, for anyone needing assistance entering the building.

Several One-Stop Centers also offer adaptive equipment that enables customers with physical impairments to use electronic self-services. At the time of our site visits, three Centers had adjustable workstations to facilitate computer usage. Providing alternatives to computer keyboards, such as touch screen monitors, represents another strategy to improve access to electronic self-services.

- In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center has touch screen monitors available on some computers and customers can register with Job Service using a touch screen interface.
- At the Workforce Development Center in *Racine, Wisconsin*, customers can access the registration kiosk or the Wisconsin JobNet system using a touch screen monitor.

Additional types of adaptive equipment designed to promote access to computers for individuals with mobility impairments include a mouthpointer device and an eyegaze operated computer keyboard, but these two types of assistive equipment were not available at any of the Centers at the time of our site visits.

Promoting Access for Customers with Hearing Impairments. Centers have attempted to promote utilization of self-services or guided services among individuals with hearing impairments through three mechanisms—adaptive equipment, closed-captioned videos, and sign language interpreters. Since many Centers offer group workshops and orientation tours, providing assistive listening systems or sign language interpreters ensures that individuals with hearing impairments have equal access to these services.

- *Adaptive equipment.* Centers have provided the following adaptive equipment for customers with hearing impairments.
    - *TTY/TDD* (telecommunications device for the deaf, sometimes called "text telephones") were most commonly used to register for UI benefits or to register with the state job matching system. At the time of our site visits, six Centers had TTY or TDD telephone systems available. In *Morrisville, Vermont*, hearing impaired customers at the Career Resources Center can use the TTY telephone

  system to inquire about a variety of services in the community.

  - *FM systems.* An FM system is a type of assistive listening system designed to be used in large meeting rooms or auditoriums. This assistive listening system is available at the Career Resources Center in *Morrisville, Vermont*.

- *Closed captioned videos.* The Work Place in *Boston, Massachusetts* has an eight-minute, closed-captioned, orientation video that highlights services and resources available. In *Bloomington, Indiana* , the Workforce Development Center has job search videos that are closed-captioned.
- *Interpretive services.* A few Centers have made arrangements to provide sign language interpreters to assist customers in the Resource Room or during workshops. These services may be available immediately upon request or by appointment. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, all staff in the same building as the Workforce Center that speak American Sign Language (ASL) have been identified and are available on an "on-call" basis.

Promoting Access for Customers with Visual Impairments. Some of the Centers in this study provide the following adaptive equipment designed to enable individuals with visual impairments to access electronic resources.

- *Zoom text software* enlarges text on a computer monitor. At the time of our visits, four Centers provided text enlargement software on some of the computers in the Resource Room.
- *17-inch monitors* can be adjusted to larger font sizes.
- *JAWS Software* provides voice read-out of whatever is activated on the computer screen. In *Austin, Texas* , customers with visual impairments at the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) can use this software to access a variety of resources, including the Internet.
- *A Braille printer* enables customers with visual impairments to access a variety of electronic resources. For example, in *Austin, Texas*, a customer might learn of a helpful Internet web site by using the JAWS software described above, and could then obtain a printout with this information using the Braille printer.

Promoting Access for Customers with Cognitive Impairments. Providing accommodations enabling customers with cognitive impairments to utilize self-services represents perhaps the greatest challenge to promoting access among individuals with disabilities. Cognitive disabilities are categorized as memory, perception, problem solving, and conceptualizing disabilities. The type of cognitive impairment can vary widely—from severe retardation to a mild learning disability—and therefore the types of functional limitations also vary tremendously. Moreover, there are few assistive devices for people with cognitive impairments.

Very few Centers in this study provide accommodations or services designed to improve access to self-services among customers with cognitive impairments. In some cases, assistive equipment for individuals with visual impairments, such as screen enlargement or voice-read out software programs, may improve access for individuals with certain visual processing disabilities. As described in the example below, the Career Development Center in *Renton, Washington* is part of an initiative to promote greater utilization of One-Stop services among individuals with learning disabilities. The Learning Disabilities project includes training One-Stop staff to increase awareness of learning disabilities, developing accommodations for individuals with learning disabilities, and a "customer attached" rather than an "agency attached" case management system that cuts across programs and coordinates services for individuals with learning disabilities.

In many of the Centers we visited, assistive technology is very infrequently utilized. By implication, Centers need to ensure that they involve the disability community in decision-making and have appropriate partnerships with Voc Rehab in place.

Designing Efforts to Promote Access for Individuals with Disabilities. Five Centers in this study had rather extensive adaptive equipment, addressing at least two of the four types of disability discussed above. Yet at many of these sites, staff indicated that the equipment is rarely utilized. Because this equipment is often quite expensive, issues that should be addressed prior to acquiring adaptive technology include the following:

- Has the Center consulted with the disability community regarding best strategies to promote access to the One-Stop Center's self-access services? Is providing adaptive equipment in the Resource Room the best strategy? If so, what types of equipment should be purchased?
- While assistive technology may promote access to self-services, can the local One-Stop system develop

strategies to ensure that the *content* of tools and resources is relevant for individuals with disabilities?

- What arrangements need to be made so that program staff and Resource Room staff receive proper training on using adaptive equipment?
- What mechanisms will the Center develop to make sure that customers with disabilities are aware of the equipment that is available? How will the Center orient customers to this equipment?
- Does the Center have appropriate referral linkages with Vocational Rehabilitation and community agencies serving individuals with disabilities to ensure that self-service resources are utilized?

Promoting Access to Self-Services Among Individuals with Disabilities

As part of a statewide effort supported by the **Vermont Assistive Technology Project**, all twelve Career Resource Centers in Vermont received adaptive technology designed to promote access to One-Stop services among individuals with hearing impairments, visual impairments, or mobility impairments. This state initiative also included staff training on using the equipment. Like other Career Resource Centers across the state, the *Morrisville, Vermont Career Resources Center* offers the following adaptive equipment: adjustable work stations, 17-inch computer monitors, Zoom Text software, an FM system and a neckloop. In addition, all twelve Career Resource Centers have established a cooperative agreement with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to provide services to DVR customers. Staff members from DVR are co-located at many of the Centers once or twice each week to assist customers using self-directed services in the Resource Room.

At the *Career Development Center (CDC)* in *Renton, Washington*, one of the One-Stop partner agencies is IAM CARES (International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers' Center for Administering Rehabilitation and Employment Services), a national organization chartered to help people with disabilities obtain and keep jobs. IAM CARES provides job clubs and programs at the CDC for individual job seekers who meet certain eligibility criteria. An IAM CARES Counselor is

Examples of Promoting Access Among Individuals with Disabilities (continued)

co-located at the CDC full-time and frequently provides assistance to IAM CARES participants using self-directed service, such as

Internet job search activities, resume development, and faxing resumes to employers. With respect to assistive equipment, the CDC has a TDD machine and some computer work stations with adjustable height. A cross-functional design team has been established to investigate additional accommodations that can be made to effectively improve access to the CDC's services for customers with disabilities.

The Renton CDC has also worked to improve access to the local One-Stop system among individuals with learning disabilities. The Seattle-King County Private Industry Council, which serves as the lead agency of the CDC, received a One-Stop system building grant from the U.S. DOL to promote greater utilization of One-Stop services among individuals with learning disabilities (LD). Staff members at the CDC have received training to increase awareness and sensitivity around learning disabilities, particularly to warning signs that may suggest an individual has a learning disability. One-Stop staff and program counselors refer individuals to the LD project for diagnostic testing. LD project staff work with case managers to determine what accommodations can be made to assist customers with disabilities, including accommodations that improve access to self-services.

For Resource Rooms to be effective in serving lower-skilled job seekers, bridging the gap in computer literacy skills will be essential.

Individuals with Limited Computer Skills

A great majority of self-services are electronic resources, such as software programs with resume templates, database systems with career exploration and labor market information, or electronic job listings on the Internet. As mentioned previously, most of the Resource Rooms in this study serve a predominantly high skilled, highly educated group of customers such as dislocated workers. These are the customers most able to utilize self-services in the Resource Room. A significant challenge facing One-Stop systems is ensuring that individuals with low computer skills have adequate access to electronic tools and resources.

Some Centers address problems in customers' computer literacy by offering free workshops or tutorials.

While several states or local areas have undertaken initiatives to promote access to One-Stop services among certain targeted groups, such as those with disabilities or welfare-to-work participants (who may tend to have low computer skills), none of the states or local sites in this study have conducted extensive outreach and designed services to increase utilization of electronic self-services among individuals with low computer skills.

Nonetheless, One-Stop Centers in this study have made some effort to assist customers in this group. These strategies generally cluster into two categories. Some efforts are geared toward helping individuals develop computer skills, thereby encouraging future utilization of electronic self-services and simultaneously helping job seekers gain an important employability skill. Other efforts instead focus on having staff essentially conduct 'self-services' on the customer's behalf, by preparing a resume, for example. Below we provide examples of these two types of strategies.

Helping Customers Improve their Computer Skills. Centers adopted the following strategies to help customers improve their computer skills:

- Providing workshops or courses on basic computer skills.
    - In *Boston*, The Work Place (TWP) offers several workshops geared toward novice computer users that are open to universal customers at no cost. *What is a Mouse?* is a one-hour workshop in which participants learn the key features of the computer system. *Introduction to Windows 95* is provided in two one-hour sessions and includes an introduction to Microsoft Word and Excel. *Hands-on Introduction to the Internet* is a one-hour workshop on using the Internet as a job search tool, designed for first-time Internet users. Finally, TWP offers a two-hour workshop called *How to Create a Resume* that includes instructions on using the WinWay software program to create a resume.
    - In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center offers an evening course in basic computer skills through one of the One-Stop partner agencies, Metro North. The course is taught on the third floor of the same building as the One-Stop Resource Room, located on the mezzanine level on the second floor, and is open to universal customers.
- Providing computer tutorials in the Resource Room. Three Centers offer the *Mavis Beacon* typing tutorial, either on computers in the Resource Room or in a separate room devoted to computer tutorial programs. These Centers also have computer tutorials to help customers improve basic skills, such as reading or math skills. When tutorials such as Mavis Beacon are available on computers in the Resource Room, it is

critical that Centers provide adequate signage and instructions so that customers are aware the program exists and have reference materials to guide them in accessing the tutorial. For example, in *Anoka*, the two computer banks in the Resource Room are labeled with large blue placards that drop from the ceiling and include a reference to "Keyboard Training."

- Providing referrals to local agencies offering computer courses. Some Centers regularly refer novice computer users to agencies or educational institutions providing free or inexpensive courses on basic computer skills. This offers individuals an opportunity to develop computer skills so that they may utilize electronic services and resources in One-Stop Centers. While this is an important referral linkage, when these agencies are located across town from the One-Stop Center there may be a lengthy delay before individuals feel prepared to use electronic resources in the Resource Room.

Providing Tutorials and Workshops to Improve Computer Skills

In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center (WDC) has an Academic Improvement Center (AIC), supported by Gateway Technical College. At the AIC, located on the first floor of the WDC adjacent to the Resource Room, customers can use individualized, self-paced tutorials to develop computer skills. Instructors are always available to help customers develop a training plan. Instructors generally have customers with very low computer skills begin by playing a computer game such as solitaire, to help them become acquainted with the mouse. The AIC has 24 computers and over 150 tutorial programs including computer tutorials such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access, and the Mavis Beacon typing tutorial. The AIC also has tutorials to help individuals develop basic reading and math skills or prepare for the GED or HSED. All services and resources in the AIC are available at no cost to universal customers.

Having Staff Directly Assist Customers with Weak Computer Skills. In seeking to assist customers with little computer experience, some Centers utilize staff-intensive strategies that are geared more toward helping customers obtain benefits from electronic self-service resources in the short-term. Thus, several Centers provide intensive, one-on-one assistance to customers with little experience using computers. For example, Resource Room staff often assist customers develop a resume using a template in a software program such as *WinWay*. Centers with designated computer terminals for the state job bank system typically have staff from Job Service or Employment Security available on-site to assist customers with registration. Similarly, counselors from JTPA programs, welfare-to-work, or other programs often accompany participants into the Resource Room to provide assistance with self-services such as resume preparation software or career exploration programs. Many sites indicated that program staff with a high degree of comfort and knowledge with computers are more effective in encouraging participants to use self-directed services.

- Because many customers have low computer skills, the Career Resources Center in *Morrisville, Vermont* provides two chairs at each computer workstation so that staff can easily assist customers with accessing electronic self-services.
- In *Racine, Wisconsin*, one of the four customer service representatives in the Resource Room spends about two hours each day helping customers with low computer skills create resumes.

Another strategy Centers adopted to assist customers with limited computer skills was to essentially conduct the self-service activity on behalf of the customer by offering word processing services.

- In *Anoka, Minnesota*, for example the Workforce Center offers word processing services for customers with low computer skills. Universal customers with little experience using computers are allowed a "one-time" word-processing service, where a staff member will type a resume and cover letter. Participants in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), the state TANF program, have an identification card that entitles them to unlimited access to word processing services.

The extent to which customers develop stronger computer skills or gain a better understanding of how to use a particular self-service resource as a result of individualized assistance from a staff person largely depends upon how this assistance is provided. Some staff members may essentially conduct the activity for the customer, whereas other staff members may provide a more detailed orientation to the self-service resource.

Participants in Welfare to Work Programs

Several Centers in this study have attempted to improve utilization of self-services among participants in welfare-to-work programs, in some cases because state policy encourages or requires participants in welfare-to-work programs to conduct job search activities at One-Stop Centers. Under Massachusetts's legislation, for example, One-Stop centers serve as the primary vehicle for service delivery for welfare-to-work customers. In Wisconsin, the welfare reform program, Wisconsin Works! (W-2) is administered through the state's One-Stop system.

Many Centers conduct targeted outreach efforts to attract participants in welfare-to-work programs into the One-Stop Center. At six of the eight One-Stop Centers in this study, participants in welfare-to-work programs receive customized orientation to the self-directed services available in the Resource Room. Most commonly this includes a tour and overview of services provided at the One-Stop Center—self, assisted, and specialized services. At half of the Centers, welfare-to-work case managers are co-located at the One-Stop center and frequently assist program participants with self-services. At many Centers, welfare-to-work participants are required to document the time devoted to job search activities in the Resource Room.

Examples of Promoting Access for Welfare-to-Work Participants

The Work Place (TWP) in *Boston, Massachusetts* has an agreement with the Department of Transitional Assistance to provide career-planning services to individuals receiving public assistance. As part of their service strategy, TWP has created a separate Job Club room for welfare-to-work customers. Intended to function as a smaller, less intimidating room than the main Resource Room, this room has one computer terminal with all of the self-services and resources that are available in the Resource Room. Customers receive individualized assistance and

Examples of Promoting Access for Welfare-to-Work Participants (continued)

orientation to self-services from TWP staff. As customers gain confidence in their computer skills they gradually transition into using the Resource Room. TWP has developed workshops specifically for participants in welfare-to-work programs. These workshops focus on the following topics: researching employers, an introduction to the Internet, an introduction to job search strategies, and preparing a resume and cover letters.

In *Racine, Wisconsin* the Workforce Development Center (WDC) is the only place in Racine County to register for public assistance. All county staff of Wisconsin Works! (W-2) are co-located at the WDC. According to staff of the Center, "this conceptually and physically supports the premise that public assistance is a temporary means of assistance while searching for employment." Participants in W-2 are required to use the Resource Room as part of their job search activities. The WDC has a timeclock, discreetly located in a corner of the Resource Room, which W-2 participants use to document time spent in the Resource Room. The WDC has prepared a special packet of exercises to help familiarize W-2 participants with self-access services. These exercises provide a step-by-step guide to accessing the following resources—the registration kiosk, computer tutorials, videos, the state JobNet system, and resume preparation program.

Some Centers work with school-to-work programs to introduce young people to tools and resources available in Resource Rooms.

Youth Customers

The extent to which "universal access" to One-Stop Centers includes youth customers varied widely across the eight sites in this study. At one extreme are Centers that conduct no outreach activities targeting youth or that discourage young people from utilizing services in the Resource Room. For example, one of the sites in our study indicated that they would like to be known as "a career center for adults only." On the other hand, some Centers have conducted extensive outreach to youth through linkages with schools, community organizations, school-to-work systems, or JTPA youth programs. For example, the Workforce Center in *Anoka County, Minnesota* has hired a full-time staff person to coordinate outreach efforts and activities geared toward youth customers.

Strategies to introduce youth customers to Resource Room services include conducting special tours and developing partnerships with local schools.

Most efforts to attract youth customers consist of special marketing and outreach activities. However, a few Centers have tailored service-delivery strategies to promote utilization of One-Stop services among youth by creating separate Resource Rooms for youth customers or 'satellite' Centers in schools or community centers. Strategies adopted by sites in this study to promote access to the One-

Stop system among youth include the following:

- *Establishing linkages with schools* to make students aware of One-Stop resources. Some Centers arrange for One-Stop staff to give presentations in schools, or they may provide teachers and counselors with information on the local One-Stop system. In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Racine Unified School District provides funding to transport students in 5th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades to the Workforce Development Center at least once during the year to learn about resources and services available at the Center.
- *Establishing linkages with community-based youth serving organizations* to raise awareness of One-Stop systems and the services they offer. In *Austin, Texas*, participants in a local job training program for under and unemployed youth tour the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South site) each Friday.

In one Center, high schoo youth can receive academic credit for participating in Center workshops on career planning.

- *Conducting outreach efforts targeting out-of-school youth* to encourage the utilization of One-Stop services. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Youth Coordinator on staff at the Workforce Center works with the Assistant Principal at the local high school to identify youth that have dropped out of school and encourage them to utilize services at the Workforce Center.
- *Conducting special tours* of the One-Stop Center for young people. Many of the outreach linkages described above include arrangements for youth to tour the local One-Stop Center. These tours often emphasize that the One-Stop system serves as an important resource for young people in the present and in the future. One manager mentioned that she hoped young people would develop a "brand loyalty" to the One-Stop Center.

Separate Resource Rooms and satellite Centers in secondary schools are additional strategies for improving access for young people.

- *Establishing linkages with School-to-Work (STW) systems* to promote utilization of One-Stop services among students. In *Renton, Washington*, STW youth can obtain academic credit for participating in workshops on career planning and job search strategies at the Career Development Center. These workshops include an orientation to several self-services. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center is the administrative agency for the county's STW initiative.
- *Establishing satellite Centers* targeting youth customers. In *Brevard County, Florida*, Job Link

Centers have been established at sixteen secondary schools as part of the School-to-Work initiative. At these satellite Centers, students, teachers and parents can access education, career exploration and employment information. Computers are equipped with Internet access and they also contain Brevard's "Workforce Organizer," a binder that provides guidance around using various electronic self-access services. In *King County, Washington*, the Seattle-King County PIC received Youth Fair Chance funding to establish Career Centers at two Parks and Recreation offices. These Career Centers include a Resource Room with Internet access, other resources, and a Career Specialist staff person.

- *Creating a separate Resource Room for youth customers* to facilitate usage of self-services. In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center has created a separate 'Resource Room' for youth customers called the Career Discovery Center (CDC). The CDC has two full-time staff and fourteen computers which provide youth customers with access to education, career exploration and employment information.
- *Designating staff* to coordinate outreach and services for youth customers. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center has hired a full-time Youth Coordinator who oversees the Center's School-to-Work (STW) grant and coordinates outreach and services for young people in STW programs, JTPA Title II programs as well as other out-of-school youth. As mentioned above, the *Racine, Wisconsin* Workforce Development Center has two full-time staff in the Career Discovery Center for youth customers.

In some Centers, information brochures are prepared in several different languages. However, it also is important that resources and tools, beyond orientation materials, be available in multiple languages, if limited English speakers are to be reached effectively.

Non-Native English Speakers

The Centers in this study all indicated that they face numerous challenges to promoting access to self-service resources among non-native individuals. One Center Manager indicated that, although the local area has a sizable population of non-native English speakers, including individuals speaking a variety of different Asian languages, the One-Stop Center lacks the financial resources to provide adequate accommodations to promote access to self-services among this population. However, despite limited financial resources and other barriers, Centers have used the following approaches to promote utilization of self-services among non-native-English-speaking customers:

- *Provide orientation resources in multiple languages.* Three Centers have been able to offer orientation materials in multiple languages.
    - In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center's three registration kiosks can be accessed in English or Spanish, using the touchscreen or voice prompt versions.
    - In *Boston, Massachusetts*, The Work Place has produced an orientation video that is available in English, Mandarin, Vietnamese, French, and Spanish.
    - Through support from the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* can provide customers with brochures on the state's One-Stop system in multiple languages.
- *Hire bilingual customer service staff.* Five Centers indicated that bilingual staff are available to assist customers in the Resource Room.
    - In *Boston, Massachusetts*, staff working in the Resource Room at The Work Place speak several different languages, including Spanish, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.
    - In *Renton, Washington*, the Career Development Center has frequently hired foreign language interpreters on a part-time basis as part of their dislocated worker rapid response efforts.
- *Provide ESL courses on-site.* Three Centers offer English as a Second Language (ESL) courses on-site. These Centers hope that offering ESL courses at the One-Stop Center will increase utilization of the Resource Room among non-native individuals.
    - In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center offers ESL and citizenship classes at no cost to universal customers through the Center's Academic Improvement Center.
    - At the Career Development Center in *Renton, Washington*, courses on English language skills are available through the Center's Adult Learning Center, but adults must meet certain

As another way of facilitating access, Centers have also established kiosks or other remote access points, such as "mini-Centers."

eligibility criteria.

- One of the partners of the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* offers ESL courses in the same building as the Center.

REMOTE ACCESS

"Remote access" to electronic data occurs principally through the dedicated job matching systems (e.g., ALEX) and Internet connections. The success of these efforts can be gauged by the enormous popularity of federal, state, and local web sites, such as America's Job Bank, which are typically accessed by individual customers from their homes or offices. In this sense, remote access is not only feasible but occurs routinely. However, Centers also attempt to make the some of the resources and tools of the Resource Rooms more accessible by using *kiosks* located in public areas or *satellite Career Centers*.

Kiosks are typically extremely limited in functionality and for this reason are often viewed as more of a marketing tool than an actual remote access point.

Kiosks. Although kiosks may provide information about local Centers, they are generally installed and maintained by state entities rather than by operators of the Centers themselves. In some localities, kiosks have been installed in public places such as libraries (*Bloomington, Indiana* and *Austin, Texas*) or in shopping malls (*Vermont*). Although kiosks can offer convenient access to job listings and limited labor market information, as well as provide "advertising" for One-Stop Centers, several problems with kiosks have been noted, including the following:

- Kiosks tend to be more limited in terms of functionality than Internet-based systems accessible through state and other web pages.
- Kiosks often do not always offer access to up-to-date information.
- Because they are "remote" centers, this can pose difficulties in terms of maintenance and prevention of vandalism.
- Little or no staff assistance is available to persons using kiosks. In the best cases, customers can use attached telephone sets to contact local One-Stop Centers or Employment Service offices.
- Public settings where kiosks are located are often noisy and offer little privacy.

By contrast, satellite Centers can be very effective in facilitating access, especially for special populations.

For these reasons, most state and local workforce system respondents did not view kiosks as particularly effective. One Center director, for example, believes that because "... the whole idea of a One-Stop Center was to have customers come into the Center, using [Center] funds to establish or support out-stationed sites would run counter to the purpose of the Center." This sentiment was also reflected during discussions with state-level personnel in other locations. In Vermont, for example, one key state respondent indicated that kiosks have not been effective in attracting people to One-Stop Centers.

Part of the negative reception to kiosks in many locations may be due to their limited functionality. For example, at kiosks in Vermont and Indiana, although users can access job listings, they cannot use this information to contact employers. Rather, they must generate printouts of job orders or make notations of these listings, so that they can later contact local Employment Offices or Career Centers.

Satellite or Mini-Centers. Perhaps more promising remote access options are "satellite Centers" or "mini-Career Centers." In these arrangements, a more comprehensive set of resources can be made accessible, often to specially targeted populations.

Providing Effective Remote Access for Special Populations

The Brevard Employment and Training Consortium (BETC), the operator of the county's One-Stop system, has adopted three approaches to creating satellites. These include:

Community Commons. At the time of the site visit to *Brevard County, Florida*, three satellite sites were located in public housing areas and one was in a social services office. The sites have small Resource Rooms with computers and Internet assess; *Choices* self-assessment software; tutorials for English, math, and typing; and access to the Florida Job Information System (JIS) and a variety of other information through the Brevard local area network (LAN). These sites also have video-conference capabilities, fax and copy machines, videos, and telephones that can be used to contact employers. In addition, these sites have a small resource library that includes a career exploration section.

Employer Mini-sites. The *Brevard Job Link* system has established temporary sites in plants where large layoffs have taken place, funded jointly by the employer and the BETC. These outplacement sites included a resource library and staff to assist

Centers desire to document usage, customer satisfaction, and outcomes. However, doing so is extremely difficult.

Providing Effective Remote Access (continued)

job seekers. Employers contribute computers and software. Staff members are supplied by the various Centers, and laid-off workers can access all services from the temporary site. Similar efforts have been undertaken in *Renton, Washington* and *Bloomington, Indiana*.

School-to-work sites. As discussed above in the section on facilitating access for youth customers, in *Brevard County*, satellite resource centers have been established at sixteen secondary schools as part of the STW initiative. These Centers enable students, teachers, and parents to access education, career, and employment information.

DOCUMENTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SELF-SERVICES SYSTEM

Documenting the performance of a self-service system represents one of the greatest challenges facing One-Stop systems. Precisely because these services are designed as "self" services rather than mediated or intensive services, which are characterized by staff involvement, tracking the usage of self-services can be difficult and expensive. Moreover, capturing the benefits or outcomes that result from utilization of self-services is exceedingly difficult. For example, a customer may use several different self-service resources during a single visit to the Resource Room—a resume writing software program, a video on interviewing skills, and job listings on the Internet. This customer may obtain employment as a result of using self-services at the One-Stop Center, but unless tracking systems are in place, the Center cannot claim credit for this placement.

Without entirely resolving this problem, the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) represents an attempt by some states to develop multi-function MIS capabilities. As these and other efforts are pursued, some important issues that should be considered include the following:

- What are the costs associated with collecting data on (1) customer usage of self-services, (2) outcomes associated with using self-services, and (3) customer satisfaction with self-services? Do the costs associated with data collection outweigh the costs of delivering self-services?
- Will the process of data collection function as a

Procedures to track usage

deterrent to usage? For example, some Centers no longer request individuals using the Resource Room to provide their social security number because many customers complained about this practice.

- What can be said with respect to the accuracy of the data? For example, are customers required to sign-in prior to using the Resource Room or specific self-services or provide identifying information? How can it be known with certainty how many or what types of customers are accessing services?
- How will the results be used? Are mechanisms in place to ensure that modifications or improvements are instituted as a result of data collected on customer usage and satisfaction?

include using sign-in sheets, computer logs, "electric eyes," and computer swipe cards.

Tracking Customer Usage

All of the Centers in this study have developed mechanisms to track customer usage of various types of self-services or mediated services, such as workshops. The most common strategy was to document the amount of customer traffic in the Resource Room, by using either a sign-in sheet at a reception desk or through a computer registry.

- At the Workforce Development Center in *Bloomington, Indiana*, customers may sign-in using a hard-copy sign-in sheet, which requests their social security number, but they are not required to do so. This Center is exploring the possibility of installing an *electric eye* device at the entrance to the Information Resource Area, which would function as a less intrusive means of tracking customer usage.
- The Work Place (TWP) in *Boston, Massachusetts* provides each customer with a bar-coded membership card. As customers enter the Resource Room they are asked to "swipe" their cards through a system that tracks general usage of the Resource Room.

The Boston Work Place encourages customers to contact the Center using a toll-free number, as a way of tracking outcomes.

Although documenting customer traffic in the Resource Room allows a Center to draw general conclusions about whether current resources adequately meet customer needs, the tracking system may not document which specific self-services customers utilize in the Resource Room. For example, which self-services tools and resources do customers most frequently utilize? As a means of addressing this issue, two Centers that use a computer registry system—*Austin, Texas* and *Renton, Washington*—ask customers to cite a reason for their visit to the Center, such as using the Internet or the state JobNet system. Finally, although many Centers emphasized that staff members often assist customers in using specific self-services, which is sometimes referred to as "facilitated self-service," none of the Centers in this study have established mechanisms to track this type of service.

Tracking Outcomes in a Self-Service Context. Although One-Stop systems face challenges in tracking customer usage of self-services, attempting to document the *outcomes* associated with usage of self-services represents an even greater challenge. As we mentioned above, it is extremely difficult for One-Stop Centers to establish mechanisms that "capture" the outcomes that result from using self-services, such as obtaining employment or enrolling in a training program. More ambitious efforts use Unemployment Insurance wage matching. However, because customers utilize different combinations of self-service tools and resources, as well as different combinations of self, mediated, and intensive services, it is extremely difficult to attach an outcome to a particular type of service.

Efforts to document outcomes from using self-services also raise important questions around the purpose of the Resource Room. Some of the Centers in this study emphasized that they view the One-Stop Center as an important community resource, as a provider of information that supports career exploration, for example. Thus, some customers using self-services may not be geared toward achieving specific outcomes, such as obtaining employment.

Examples of Tracking System Performance in a Self-Service Context

In Austin, Texas, the *Capitol of Texas Workforce Center* (South) uses a registration form to collect basic demographic information as well as "job-matching" codes based on previous employment. After initial registration, and during each subsequent visit to the Center, customers enter their social security number on a computer registry, checking services to be accessed. When they leave the Center, customers log out at the exit door and complete an exit survey. Quarterly reports, analyzing customer characteristics and Center usage, are sent to the Workforce Development Board.

At *The Work Place (TWP)* in Boston, Massachusetts, each customer registers and is given a membership card with a bar-code. The bar-code swipe-card system tracks usage of three

Examples of Tracking System Performance (continued)

general types of services—the Resource Library; participation in workshops; and participation in intensive services, such as meetings with a career specialist. As an effort to capture outcomes that may result from utilizing Center services, such as the Resource Library, TWP has recently instituted a "Finish Line" system. Customers are encouraged to contact TWP, using a toll-free telephone number, when they have obtained employment. TWP also uses a database called *Client IMS* that tracks information about members, including services used, program eligibility information, and case notes. All One-Stop centers in the state are connected to this system.

As customers enter the *Career Development Center (CDC) in Renton, Washington,* they are greeted by one of three staff members working at the reception desk. Whether they are new or repeat customers, individuals sign-in at a computer near the entrance, providing their name and primary reason for visiting the CDC—computer usage, Resource Library, learning centers, or appointment with a program counselor. This information is entered into a database that generates daily and monthly reports tracking the utilization of services and resources for continuous improvement purposes. The CDC also uses a Microsoft Access database to track customer participation in the CDC's numerous workshops. While the computer registration was initially designed to collect a customer's social security number, which would have enabled the CDC to make observations about how utilization of the Resource Room varied according to program-eligibility status, this feature was eliminated due to customer complaints.

Customer satisfaction can be assessed using formal surveys or a suggestion box.

Measuring Customer Satisfaction

Given the challenges and issues described above concerning tracking customer usage of self-services, many Centers have devoted more resources toward measuring customer satisfaction with self-service tools and resources. Results from these data collection efforts—which generally solicit information from customers around the extent to which self-services are accessible and helpful—are often used to improve access to self-services. Some Centers have developed formal surveys, which are used to gauge customer satisfaction with the Resource Room in particular or the One-Stop Center in general. Other Centers place a "suggestion box" in a prominent location in the Resource Room as an informal means of gathering customer feedback. As discussed in the example below, The Work Place in *Boston, Massachusetts* has created "continuous quality improvement teams" charged with gathering customer satisfaction data across different aspects of Center operations.

In some cases, efforts to measure customer satisfaction have been initiated at the state level. In *Wisconsin*, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) conducts a random customer satisfaction survey of individuals accessing the state's JobNet system from One-Stop Career Centers, and results are shared with local Centers. Similarly, the *Minnesota* Department of Economic Security has surveyed customers regarding their satisfaction with services and resources available at One-Stop Centers. In general, customers in Minnesota often cited high satisfaction with staff assistance, job search tools, and the positive atmosphere at One-Stop Centers; complaints included a desire for more computers and extended hours. Statewide customer satisfaction initiatives have also been implemented in *Indiana* and *Vermont*.

Examples of Efforts to Measure Customer Satisfaction

In *Boston, Massachusetts, The Work Place* (TWP) has implemented "continuous quality improvement" (CQI) principles in several ways. First, TWP has created a series of CQI teams composed of management and line staff. Each team is responsible for addressing issues related to Center operations, based upon feedback gathered from customers. For example, a CQI team recently conducted a project that included administering a customer satisfaction survey regarding the existing periodicals, reference books, and other hard-copy resources available in the Resource Library. The team used the survey results to determine which journals should be discontinued because customers rarely use them and which additional periodicals should be available in the Resource Library due to strong customer interest. Additional aspects of Center operations that have been reviewed and modified by CQI teams include the reception area and the process for orientating customers to the Resource Room.

The *Capitol of Texas Workforce Center* (South) in *Austin, Texas* solicits customer satisfaction information through a couple of different survey instruments. As customers leave the Center they are asked to complete an "exit survey." The survey, which is available in English and Spanish, includes questions pertaining to customer satisfaction around the courteousness and helpfulness of Center staff, the usefulness of the information they received, and overall satisfaction with the Center (using a four-point scale). The Center has also developed a one-page customer satisfaction

Efforts to Measure Customer Satisfaction (continued)

survey. The survey asks twelve general questions regarding the services and staff assistance available at the Center and also asks customers to provide feedback regarding the extent to which they were satisfied with different types of services (e.g. brochures, Internet, computer lab, job search workshops). The Center has used results from these customer satisfaction surveys to improve access to Center services and resources. For example, the Center decided to offer extended hours as a result of customer feedback.

IV. STAFFING AND STAFF ROLES

Some One-Stop Centers in this study indicated that initially their desire was to build a Center that would be "easy to use," so that services could be accessed with little staff assistance. Their original intent or goal was thus to develop a strong self-service infrastructure that would be minimally staff intensive. Several Centers expressed that having a customer-friendly self-service system of this sort would enable the One-Stop system to provide a baseline set of services to universal customers, even when local workforce development resources dwindle.

Centers came to see that customers need staff assistance to be able to use Resource Rooms effectively.

Yet most of the Centers in this study indicated that, over time, their vision around the role of staff in a self-service environment changed significantly. During the initial phases of One-Stop planning and implementation, several staff at the state and local levels believed that self-services could largely be delivered as a stand-alone feature—it was thought that customers would access self-services on their own and would require little staff assistance. However, individuals using the Resource Room have varying levels of comfort, knowledge, and experience with self-service tools and resources. Thus, in order to effectively facilitate access to self-services, many Centers have discovered that customer service staff must be available in the Resource Room to provide an orientation to self-service resources and to assist customers on an ongoing basis. In fact, at some of the Centers we visited, job seeker customers using the Resource Room indicated that staff members were the greatest resource at the Center.

STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE RESOURCE ROOM

The One-Stop Centers in this study used different approaches to staffing the Resource Room and other self-service areas. Some Centers provide full-time customer service representatives in the Resource Room, whose primary responsibilities include maintaining the self-service tools and resources and assisting customers. At other Centers, staff members from different programs provide customer service in the Resource Room on a rotating basis or on an "on-call" basis, as they are needed. A few Centers utilize both of these staffing arrangements, often as a means of increasing the provision of customer service during peak hours in the Resource Room. Beyond handling peak loads, other factors influencing staffing arrangements in the Resource Room include the amount of customer traffic, available funding for services for universal customers, and partnership agreements between One-Stop partner agencies.

Examples of the different approaches to providing staff assistance in the Resource Room are described below.

Staff are assigned to the Resource Room either full-time or on an as-needed basis.

- Customer Service Representatives may work in the Resource Room on a full-time basis.
  - In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center has four full-time customer service representatives at the Help Desk, as well as a supervisor to assist customers in the Resource Room. There are also two full-time staff members working in the Career Discovery Center, a separate room with self-service resources for youth customers. Additional staff members work in other areas of the self-service system on a full-time basis.
  - In *Boston, Massachusetts*, The Work Place (TWP) has three staff members who work in the Resource Library on a rotating basis. At least one staff member is working in the Resource Library at any given time, and during peak times TWP has two staff members available to assist customers. TWP has a diverse, multilingual staff, with staff members that speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. When these staff members are not working in the Resource Library they are often facilitating workshops for universal customers.
  - In *Renton, Washington*, the Career Development Center (CDC) has a customer service team composed of five line staff and one supervisor. Three staff members greet customers, assist customers in the Resource Library, and provide administrative support to the CDC. In addition, two computer support staff maintain the computer network servers and assist customers in the computer areas.
- Staff members from different specialized programs may be available on a part-time or as-needed basis.

Several Centers have arranged for program counselors to assist customers from targeted population groups in using self-service resources, such as participants in welfare-to-work programs or individuals with disabilities.

  - At the Career Resources Center in *Morrisville, Vermont*, nine counselors from different programs have offices in cubicles that cluster around the exterior of the Resource Room. These staff members frequently escort program participants to the Resource Room and assist them in using self-service tools and resources. In addition, these counselors are available on an as-needed basis to assist universal customers in the Resource Room.
  - At the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) in *Austin, Texas*, staff members from five different programs each work in the Resource Room ten hours every week to augment the services provided by two full-time Resource Technicians and a half-time Green Thumb employee.
  - In *Renton, Washington*, a counselor from IAM CARES, an organization providing rehabilitation services, works at the CDC full-time and frequently assists customers with disabilities in using self-service resources.

- Off-site staff members from partner agencies may be available "on-call" or by appointment. This arrangement is frequently used to provide individualized assistance to customers with disabilities.
  - At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota*, staff members from Social Services for the Blind (SSB) are available to meet with customers on an "on-call" or referral basis. SSB is one of the partners in the Center and its offices are located in downtown Minneapolis, approximately 25 miles from Anoka.
  - In *Bloomington, Indiana*, counselors from Vocational Rehabilitation are available to assist customers at the Workforce Development Center on an "on-call" basis.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

One-Stop staff have a variety of different roles and responsibilities in a self-service environment. In general, those Centers offering a broad array of mechanisms to orient customers to self-services—workshops, orientation tours, print materials, individualized staff assistance—devote a significant amount of staff resources to provide customer service in self-service areas. Across the eight sites included in this study, the different roles and responsibilities of staff members in a self-service environment included the following:

Staff provide a variety of functions, including acting as greeters, conducting orientation, facilitating workshops, and conducting assessments.

- Conducting intake and reception activities
- Providing customers with an orientation to the Resource Room
- Providing customers with individualized assistance in the Resource Room
- Developing workshop curricula and local resources
- Facilitating workshops on self-services
- Organizing and maintaining self-service resources
- Providing vocational counseling.

Conducting intake and reception activities. All of the Centers in this study have arranged for staff members to conduct intake and reception activities. These staff members—sometimes referred to as "greeters" or "receptionists"—typically welcome customers, provide basic information about the One-Stop Center, and often give new customers a brief tour of the Resource Room. Another common responsibility of greeters or receptionists is ensuring that customers sign-in using a hard-copy or computer registry.

- In *Morrisville, Vermont*, the receptionist at the Career Resource Center greets customers and distributes an orientation packet to new customers that contains a variety of brochures and information about the One-Stop Center.
- In *Racine, Wisconsin*, three registration kiosks near the entrance to the Workforce Development Center provide basic information about the Center's services and resources. Customers can also register for services and obtain basic information about the Center from a greeter working at the reception desk.
- In *Anoka, Minnesota*, a "Greeter's Desk," located near the entrance to the Resource Center, is staffed at

all times by one of two part-time greeters. The greeters—generally the first staff members to welcome customers to the Center—provide new customers with an orientation tour of the Resource Center and simultaneously gather basic information on new customers using a checklist. This information helps the greeter or other Center staff determine whether a customer should be referred to a particular program for specialized services.

First-time users need an orientation or overview of tools available in the Resource Room.

Providing customers with an orientation to the Resource Room. As discussed in the chapter on "Facilitating Access to Self-Services," most Centers provide new customers with an orientation to the array of self-service tools and resources available at the Center, either in a group or individualized setting. Orientation sessions may be facilitated by a greeter, customer service specialist, or a program counselor.

- In *Austin, Texas*, staff at the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) indicated that, while the initial one-on-one tour and orientation for new customers is rather time consuming, it provides staff with a valuable opportunity to become acquainted with customers and direct them to particular services at the Center or in the community. This individualized tour is provided by one of the two full-time Resource Technicians in the Resource Room or a program staff member working in the Resource Room.
- The Melbourne Job Link Center in *Brevard County, Florida*, offers a weekly orientation workshop once a week. The workshop, which lasts about two and a half hours, includes an in-depth tour of the Resource Area, an overview of the state's Jobs and Information System, and a review of specialized programs accessible through the Center.

In some Centers, staff rove around the Resource Room, providing help as needed.

Providing customers with individualized assistance in the Resource Room. All of the Centers in this study have instituted mechanisms to provide customers in the Resource Room with individualized assistance. One-Stop staff members may assist customers in the Resource Room on a full-time, part-time, or as-needed basis. Centers that provide customer service on a full-time basis often have staff members positioned at a "Help Desk." In some cases, customer service representatives are quite proactive, roving around the Resource Room asking customers whether they would like assistance. At other Centers, customers must request assistance from a

The need to provide individualized staff assistance can be minimized when Centers staff member. Centers that lack clear, written guidelines for using self-service resources may experience an especially strong need to provide customers with individualized assistance.

provide clear, written guidance for using Resource Room materials.

Developing workshop curricula and local resources. Designing and developing mechanisms to teach customers how to use self-service tools and resources, such as through workshops and print materials, also requires a significant amount of staff time. For example, as we discuss in Chapter III, several Centers have developed workshops that focus on using particular self-service resources, such as job searching on the Internet or preparing a resume using a computer program. Additional types of orientation materials developed by One-Stop staff members include informational flyers and instructional handouts describing specific self-service programs and features. This work may be conducted by Resource Room customer service staff or by counselors from specialized programs.

Most Centers conduct a variety of workshops open to the universal customer. Developing and conducting these workshops becomes an important staff function.

In some cases, local One-Stop systems have allocated staff time to develop their own self-service resources, such as a local talent bank. During the time of our site visits, for example, a few Centers were in the process of developing an Internet web page for the One-Stop Center. Below we describe some of the workshops and local resources developed by staff members at the Centers in this study.

The CDC in Renton has developed an annotated list of helpful Internet sites. A copy is included in Appendix D.

- The Career Development Center (CDC) in *Renton, Washington* has developed print materials that facilitate access to self-services, such as an annotated bibliography of helpful Internet web sites. The CDC has also developed curricula for workshops on the Internet, resume preparation, labor market information, and the state's JobNet system.
- In *Brevard County, Florida*, the Job Link system has created a resource called the Workforce Organizer that provides step-by-step directions on how to access all software programs and Internet websites.
- In *Racine, Wisconsin*, The Workforce Development Center (WDC) is currently developing a computer database system called "YouthNet," which would provide young people with information about paid employment opportunities, community service opportunities, youth-serving organizations in the community, and community events for youth. The WDC anticipates that ultimately this system would be accessible via the Internet.

- At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* , a regional labor market information analyst, co-located at the Center on a full-time basis, has undertaken efforts to improve access to LMI for customers and staff members of the Center. The LMI liaison has offered workshops for staff members to discuss the importance and relevance of LMI for job seekers. The liaison also assists staff with incorporating LMI, particularly local LMI, in customer workshops on career exploration and job search strategies. Finally, the liaison has also created a "Hot Jobs" bulletin, which features a growing occupation, along with its wages, prospects, and skills and training requirements.

Facilitating workshops on self-services. Several One-Stop Centers offer workshops that provide customers with an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of self-service resources, such as computer software for resume writing or career exploration and self-assessment. As Centers develop workshops for universal customers they must concurrently determine which staff members should facilitate these workshops. At the Centers we visited for this study, workshops were generally facilitated by Resource Room staff or by program counselors co-located at the One-Stop Center on a full-time basis.

- The Career Development Center (CDC) in *Renton, Washington* offers an Internet workshop twice each week. This workshop is facilitated by one of the two computer support staff who work in the self-service computer areas. The CDC offers several other workshops for universal customers pertaining to self-services, some of which are facilitated by counselors from specialized programs who work at the CDC on a full-time or part-time basis.
- The Work Place (TWP) in *Boston, Massachusetts* offers a wide variety of workshops pertaining to self-service tools and resources, including a basic introduction to using a computer, using the Internet, and preparing a resume. These workshops are facilitated by staff members working in the Resource Library or by counselors who primarily work with customers on an individualized basis.

Organizing and maintaining hard-copy and electronic resources are additional staff functions that Resource Rooms must plan for.

Organizing and maintaining self-service resources. Another significant responsibility for staff members in a self-service environment involves organizing and maintaining hard-copy and electronic tools and resources. For example, materials in the Resource

Room library—books, periodicals, videos, catalogs—must be grouped by category and clearly identified with appropriate signage. A more labor-intensive task entails maintaining the computer hardware and software programs at the One-Stop Center.

- At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Resource Technician has developed several systems to facilitate access to self-service resources. Bookshelves with hard-copy information include framed signs above each section indicating the resource subject. In addition, the Resource Technician maintains a "book inventory" with the author and title of each publication and its location within the Center.
- In *Brevard County, Florida*, a Consortium Resource Specialist maintains the hard-copy materials and videos available at each of the nine sites in the county's Job Link system. This staff person is sometimes available to assist customers with finding appropriate resource materials.
- At the Workforce Development Center (WDC) in *Racine, Wisconsin*, technical support for the computer hardware and software and the network server is provided by a team of about six employees. However, these staff members provide technical support for both the WDC and the Racine County Human Services Department.

Vocational counseling. A couple of Centers provide vocational counseling as a service available to universal customers, at little or no cost.

Some Resource Rooms offer individual or group vocational assessment, available to the universal customer. Thus, counseling is an additional staff function.

- In *Racine, Wisconsin* the Workforce Development Center has a separate room located at the far end of the Resource Room called the Career Development Area (CDA), which contains a variety of resources on assessment and career exploration. Two vocational counselors have offices in the CDA and are available full-time to meet with universal customers on an individual basis and to administer assessment tools. Customers can make an appointment to meet with a vocational counselor by using the registration kiosk or inquiring with the receptionist.
- In *Bloomington, Indiana* counselors at the Workforce Development Center administer the CAPS/COPS/COPES assessment each Tuesday to universal customers that are interested in this resource.

Examples of Staffing Arrangements in the Resource Room

At the *Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) in Austin, Texas,* Center management views staffing as a crucial aspect of operations. For this reason, in addition to two full-time "resource technicians" and a half-time Green Thumb receptionist, staff from each partnering program work in the Resource Center ten hours each week. In addition, a staff person from Goodwill Industries also works in the Resource Center sixteen hours a week. Resource technicians ensure that electronic information systems are operating properly, and update binders, the job board, and computer job listings. All staff conduct orientations and tours, and assist Resource Center users with registration and job matching and the range of self-services available at the Center.

The *Career Development Center (CDC) in Renton, Washington* ensures that customers using self-services can easily access staff assistance. The CDC has a customer services team composed of five line staff and one supervisor. Three staff members are responsible for greeting customers, assisting customers in the Resource library, and providing administrative support to all CDC staff. In addition, two computer support staff maintain the computer network servers and provide assistance to customers in the computer areas. The workstation for these two staff members has windows that look out into the Resource library and all three computer areas (computer lab, classroom, and Internet room). This design ensures that staff members are readily accessible for customer assistance and allows staff to easily monitor the self-service areas.

BUILDING STAFF CAPACITY

The variety of staff roles in the Resource Room gives rise to the need for building staff capacity.

The self-service infrastructure in One-Stop Centers generates a need for staff training in a variety of different respects. First, training is often required to ensure that staff members possess the necessary computer skills to assist customers with electronic self-service resources. Second, Centers offering adaptive equipment to facilitate access among individuals with disabilities must train staff members on using assistive technology. Third, staff members may be called upon to develop new skills, such as facilitating workshops for universal customers. Finally, promoting a culture of customer service within the One-Stop Center typically requires training and team-building activities, particularly when staff working in the Resource Room represent a number of different partner agencies—each with its own identity and work culture.

One-Stop Centers in this study emphasized that the need for staff training is continuous. Staff members providing customer service in the Resource Room must keep abreast of new and revised computer programs that draw upon the latest advancements in information technology. Several states, for example, are developing new or expanded database systems that link information in four different areas: (1) career exploration, (2) self-assessment, (3) labor market information, and (4) information on education and training providers. Although these systems are usually designed to be fairly "user-friendly," staff may need special training around how to manage the "cross-walks" that link the different types of information.

The need for staff training is continuous.

In addition to ensuring that Resource Room staff receive proper training on new computer programs, One-Stop systems have also attempted to provide opportunities for staff from specific programs, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Welfare-to-Work, and JTPA programs, to receive training on self-services. Program staff can play a critical role in encouraging and assisting participants to use self-service resources, as we discussed in Chapter III.

Across the eight Centers in this study, One-Stop staff working in self-service areas participated in training activities in the following areas:

- *Providing Customer Service*. One of the key themes of One-Stop system-building is to provide a seamless service-delivery system characterized by high-quality customer service. To promote this goal, some One-Stop systems have arranged for staff members to participate in training sessions related to providing customer service. For example, staff members working in the Resource Room might participate in team-building training, particularly if these staff members represent different partner agencies. In some cases, training on providing customer service may focus on assisting individuals from certain population groups, such as persons with disabilities.
    - At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota*, staff members have participated in cross-training sessions as a means of learning about the programs and services available through One-Stop partner agencies. In addition, the Center has taken advantage of

training offered through the Training and Learning Office (TRLO) in Minneapolis, including training on customer service. The TRLO is a local training office for the Minnesota Department of Economic Security.

  - At the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) in *Austin, Texas*, staff members participated in a training session focused on providing customer service to individuals with disabilities. A representative from Disability Services at the Texas Workforce Commission held a series of meetings at the local level to increase awareness of resources for job seekers with disabilities.

- *Presentation Skills*. Several Centers have asked staff members to facilitate workshops on self-services or other topics, which may represent a new role for One-Stop staff members. As a result, some Centers have arranged for training sessions on presentation skills.
  - The Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* contracted with a local community college to provide "train-the-trainer" workshops for One-Stop staff members on large-group presentation skills.
- *Computer Skills*. In order to assist customers in using the wide array of electronic self-service resources, One-Stop staff members, particularly those individuals working in the Resource Room, often need computer training.
  - When the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) in *Austin, Texas* first opened, the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) provided training on using the different SOICC software programs that would be available at the Center.
  - In *Brevard County, Florida*, staff members at the Melbourne Job Link Center participated in technical and computer training offered by the Brevard County Community College. This training included sessions on using the state's labor market information system, the *Choices* career exploration program, Microsoft Office, and the state's Job Information System.
- *Operating Assistive Technology Equipment*. As One-Stop Centers acquire special adaptive equipment enabling individuals with disabilities to access self-

Staff training has consiste of team building, familiarizing staff with computer hardware and software, and teaching them about assistive technology.

services, staff members working in the Resource Room must receive training on using assistive technology.

- As discussed in Chapter III, all twelve Career Resource Centers in Vermont received adaptive technology equipment as part of a statewide effort. Once adaptive equipment had been installed at the Center in *Morrisville, Vermont*, staff members received training on using the equipment from the Vermont Assistive Technology Project.

CHALLENGES TO BUILDING STAFF CAPACITY

The One-Stop Centers in this study experienced a variety of challenges with respect to enhancing staff capacity in a self-service environment. Providing enough staff members in the Resource Room to assist customers is a significant challenge for some Centers. Centers also have difficulty providing sufficient opportunities for staff training. In this section we discuss some of these challenges and highlight some of the strategies Centers in this study have used to address them.

Challenges in building staff capacity include the need for providing ongoing training, dealing with staff turnover, and promoting a common customer-oriented approach to services.

Limited funding for services for universal customers. Many Centers have struggled with maintaining adequate staffing arrangements in the Resource Room due to limited funding to serve universal customers. At some Centers there may be few or no staff in the Resource Room, whose primary responsibilities are assisting customers. (However, as a result of the Workforce Investment Act, Centers may acquire greater resources and flexibility in providing services for universal customers.)

- In *Austin, Texas*, the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) supplements the two full-time Resource Technicians working in the Resource Room by having staff from One-Stop partner agencies work in the Resource Room on a part-time basis. Each day, three staff members from different programs provide customer service in the Resource Room. Staff members from five different programs—Food Stamps Employment and Training, JTPA, Employment Services, Veterans and TANF—are required to work in the Resource Room for ten hours each week.

Ongoing need for staff training. Centers in this study emphasized that they experience a continuous need to train staff on self-services, as well as other One-Stop resources. In some cases, the ongoing need for staff training arises from a high degree of staff turnover at the Center, which sometimes occurs as a result of system restructuring. New staff members, particularly those working in the Resource Room, must acquire the necessary skills to assist customers with self-service resources. In addition, due to advancements in technology, the array of electronic self-service tools and resources available at many One-Stop Centers is quite broad. As new types of electronic self-services become available, staff members must learn how to operate them in order to provide customer service.

- The Career Development Center in *Renton, Washington* has instituted a staff training system, called the *CDC Passport*, to help integrate staff from various partner agencies and promote a seamless service delivery system. While this cross training includes self-services and technology issues, the Passport "destinations" also include workshops and materials that help staff learn about all programs and services offered through the CDC.
- At the time of our site visit, the Workforce Development Board (WDB) in *Brevard County, Florida* was developing a training curriculum—the Ambassador training system—to help train staff members who will assist the general public in any of the Job Link system's nine sites. Staff members will receive training in the services available at Job Link Centers, including training on computer systems. Brevard County also encourages staff members in the Job Link system to take advantage of free courses offered through Brevard County Community College, the fiscal agent for the One-Stop partnership.
- In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center conducts in-service training, which is open to all staff members, whenever new self-service resources become available at the Center.

Promoting a culture of customer service. Some Centers indicated that one of the biggest challenges they have encountered with respect to staffing arrangements in a self-service environment concerns promoting a culture of customer service in the Resource Room. This may be particularly challenging when the team of staff members working in the Resource Room represents a number of different partner agencies, each with its own norms and work culture. Moreover, the sense of teamwork and coordination among staff members suffers when Centers experience high staff turnover.

- The Workforce Development Center (WDC) in *Racine, Wisconsin* has instituted several mechanisms to promote a sense of unity among staff and a commitment to customer service. The WDC has created functional teams to promote team-building and communication across staff members performing similar functions. The Resource Room functional team meets regularly, and like other functional teams, minutes from team meetings are posted in public folders on the WDC's computer network. In addition, although several different agencies are represented at the Center, each staff member receives a set of business cards with the WDC's logo.
- Several Centers have held retreats for all staff of the One-Stop Center. For example, the Career Development Center (CDC) in *Renton, Washington* held a one-day staff retreat to promote team building and increase knowledge about different programs and agencies represented at the CDC.
- As mentioned above, staff members at the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* have participated in training on customer service.

Ensuring that staff can meet the needs of a very diverse customer base is also a significant challenge.

Meeting the needs of a diverse customer base. Staff members working in the Resource Room play a critical role in directing customers to appropriate self-services, and also to additional resources available within the One-Stop Center or in the community, particularly to resources that might enhance their ability to access self-service tools and resources. Because of the varied needs of One-Stop customers—who range from dislocated workers with substantial skills to individuals with limited education and work experience—meeting the needs of such a diverse group of customers represents a major challenge for staff members. Ideally, staff members are prepared to respond to a variety of different issues, such as referring customers to courses on basic computer skills, or assisting customers with disabilities in using adaptive equipment.

- At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* several partner agencies have staff members co-located at the Center, and many other human service agencies have a presence in the building. Staff members in the Resource Center frequently refer customers to resources in the Center or the Human Service building. Greeters in the Resource Center familiarize new customers with resources at the Center, and also gather information about the individual's needs and reasons for visiting the Resource Center using a checklist. This checklist helps the Greeter determine whether a customer should be referred to a program counselor or another resource located in the building, such as the adult education center.

- The Workforce Development Center (WDC) in *Racine, Wisconsin* has created a WDC newsletter to keep staff members informed of recent developments and major issues at the Center. Moreover, an "intra-net" network system facilitates e-mail communication between staff members at the WDC. For example, whenever the employer services team has arranged for employer recruiting sessions at the WDC, all staff members receive a notification via e-mail.
- Staff training systems, such as the "CDC Passport" system in *Renton, Washington* and the "Ambassador training program" in *Brevard County, Florida*, both of which are discussed above, also help ensure that One-Stop staff members are aware of different programs and resources accessible through the Center.

Examples of Providing Staff Training

At the *Workforce Development Center in Racine, Wisconsin,* breaking down the "old agency cultures" and the old way of doing things and moving towards a cohesive, customer-oriented approach was identified as an important goal. Towards accomplishing this goal, WDC has created a Resource Room "functional team" to promote team-building. The team meets regularly to discuss strategies for improving customer services. Staff members also participated in a retreat at a nearby conference facility, again as part of the effort to instill a cohesive vision and promote a sense of common purpose. Finally, the WDC prepares a newsletter disseminated to staff, for purposes of improving communication and coordination.

V. INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This chapter reviews the types of information and resources available to job seekers in the eight One-Stop Career Centers in our sample. Sections of this chapter treat specific aspects related to the job search and career development. Specifically we examine sources of information for the following resource categories: (1) assessment and career planning; (2) information on education and training opportunities; (3) labor market information (LMI); (4) the job search and job listings; and (5) tools for resumes and cover letter preparation.

Some of the tools and information resources that we discuss in this chapter are available to individual job seekers through sources other than Career Centers. For example, with the rapid development of electronic media, any person with Internet access can now search a variety of electronic job listings. Large bookstores and libraries have information relating to the range of topics addressed in this chapter, including the job search, career planning, resumes and cover letters, and information on education and training opportunities. However, in our examination of the self-service tools and resources available at Career Centers, we are interested in not only the specific offerings of Resource Centers, but examine the effectiveness and relevance of these tools within the *One-Stop context*. One of the most obvious benefits—and certainly a key to the concept behind the creation of One-Stop Centers—is that they offer a broad range of services and resources to customers within one convenient location.

Besides this convenience, there are other positive factors that distinguish the use of self-services within the context of Career Centers. For example, Career Centers can offer a support structure to job seekers during what is often a very stressful period in their lives. Also—and this is particularly true for individuals with little experience in conducting a self-directed job search—Career Centers provide many opportunities to become acquainted with the skills necessary to gradually transition from a reliance on staff assistance to a self-directed career development and job search. To a great extent, therefore, Career Centers provide added value not only by making tools accessible to customers, but also by helping customers understand how

Centers make a comprehensive packet of resources available in a single location, while providing an important culture of support.

best to use the resources available to them.

Many of these aspects have been discussed in other chapters of this report and in earlier One-Stop evaluations. However, before turning to an examination of the self-service resources available at Centers, we briefly highlight those aspects of One-Stop Center operations that can have a direct bearing on the quality and effectiveness of self-service tools. Among the contextual factors that enhance or encourage the effective use of self-services, of particular importance are the following:

- The availability of general orientations and workshops that develop customer knowledge of the available self-services tools.
- The degree to which the Center is organized to promote maximum access to relevant data. This can include the development of guides or other materials that help customers use electronic and other self-service resources.
- Staff members' understanding of the self-service resource tools and their accessibility and willingness to assist customers to become familiar with these tools.
- A culture of support from staff and other One-Stop customers that provides encouragement during what is often a very vulnerable time.

Contextual factors enhancing effectiveness include:

— comprehensiveness of tools and resources
— orientations
— a good organization of materials, with appropriate guides
— staff assistance
— support from peers

These and other contextual factors are extremely important in understanding self-services in One-Stop Centers. For this reason, although the focus of this chapter is primarily on the *information* and *resources* for self-services, we have also attempted to discuss the *integration* of self-services within the broader One-Stop context. As a result, we do not limit ourselves to only describing the available information tools and resources, but also discuss strategies that Centers have adopted to promote their effective use. We base our analysis on discussions with local and state staff and visits to Centers and remote access sites.

We learned from our data collection that, although all of the Centers in our sample offer customers a range of self-service tools and information related to the job search process, customers' use of these resources varies greatly by category of service. In most sites, individual customers were primarily interested in finding immediate employment, and therefore tended to use those self-services that they believe most *directly related to their job search*. As a result, access to job-listing services and resume-writing packages were consistently highly valued among job seekers. For the same reason, customers also very much appreciated being able to use fax machines, photocopiers, and telephones, which most Centers made available free of charge (within limits) for job-related activities. With some notable exceptions, individual customers made relatively less use of tools for career assessment and exploration, materials on education and training providers, and information relating to labor markets. Nonetheless, we discuss all the major categories of self-service resources and tools.

Most customers are interested primarily in conducting a job search and preparing a resume. Thus, resources most directly related to these activities were used the most.

ASSESSMENT AND CAREER PLANNING

The Centers included in our sample all offer the universal customer self-service options for individualized assessment and career planning, including access to electronic and print resources. These resources are available from a number of sources, including national and state government departments, research institutions and universities, and private vendors. In the majority of sites, self-service offerings are complemented by free workshops that introduce the universal customers to the use of electronic tools. In many of the sites, staff-assisted assessment and career planning services are also available free of charge.

Electronic Resources

The sites in the sample provide all customers with self-service electronic resources for career planning. These tools generally permit customers to explore information on wages, occupational outlook, and training required for specific occupations. Many computer programs also allow customers to conduct a self-inventory, to determine career interests, and to research occupations as well as schools and training institutions that offer relevant coursework.

All sites offer options for career assessment and planning, but tools vary in their sophistication and ease of use.

In several cases, these electronic resources have been developed through contracts with state-level organizations and are distributed by these state entities to Career Centers. In other cases, Centers purchase career planning and assessment tools directly from private vendors. Although state-developed and commercial products contain many similar features, for the purpose of exposition we describe them separately in the sections below. A matrix of products at the Career Centers in our sample is also presented in Figure V-1 below. Because career exploration products are numerous, the following sections offer brief descriptions of just a sample of them.

State-developed Tools. Four states in the sample—Texas, Indiana, Washington, and Wisconsin—have developed computer career planning tools that are used at the Centers in their state. The resource tools in this category include the following:

Electronic career-planning tools link career assessment with information on the characteristics of occupations and their training requirements

- *Career Visions*, a system developed by the State of Wisconsin, includes a self-assessment module on interests, education level, and aptitudes; occupational information describing jobs, work hours and conditions, salary levels, and the typical career path within occupations; the employment outlook for particular careers in the state; national factors affecting employment trends; and information on education and training providers.
- The *Washington Occupation Information System* (WOIS), an Internet-based system, provides information on labor markets, occupations, educational requirements, schools, and military employment. Users can also choose to take self-assessment such as the *Strong Interest Inventory* and the *COPS* assessment. Based on assessment results, users generate a list of potentially relevant occupations. If they choose to, users can then review occupational information on typical job duties, related occupations, work environment, wage information, necessary preparation and education, and personal characteristics that make for a good job match.
- The *Indiana Career Information System* (ICIS), available on PCs within the Center or via Internet, was developed by the Indiana Career and Postsecondary Advancement Center (ICPAC) at Indiana University. The system allows any state resident to conduct a self-inventory to determine career interests, then link with career resources on specific occupations and schools.
- In Texas, the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) distributes three separate CD-ROM career exploration tools. These include *Texas Cares*, a career exploration tool designed primarily for high school students that matches high school students' work values to jobs and allows them to explore more than 400 occupations; *Oscar*, a career planning and exploration program that emphasizes skills transfer; and *Rescue*, a program originally designed for dislocated workers that

contains career exploration components.

Figure V-1
Selected Electronic Assessment and Career Planning Tools

Career Planning Tools	FL	IN	MA	MN	TX	VT	WA	WI
State Products								
Those Primarily for Adults		X			X		X	X
Those Primarily for Youth					X			
Commercial Products								
Career Finder		X						
Choices CT (Adults)	X	X		X		X		
Choices JR (Youth)						X		
Discovery Career			X					
Sigi Plus							X	X
What Color is Your Parachute?			X					

Note: Because of the availability of ICIS in Indiana, the state does not currently support Choices CT. However, many Bloomington counselors continue to recommend it because of its "user-friendliness" and because it includes more information on specific schools, both in-state and out-of-state. In contrast, counselors in Anoka were not recommending the version that they were using at the time of the site visit and were waiting for the release of a newer version.

Commercially developed tools. Many Centers also offer career assessment products developed and distributed by private vendors. Among the Centers in our sample, the most widely available of these products (available at four Career Centers) was *Choices CT*. Other tools include *What Color is my Parachute?* and *Sigi Plus*. These products are briefly described below:

- *Choices* is a career exploration tool that allows users to determine which employment areas they would like to pursue. *Choices* contains interest inventories, data on transferable skills, and an aptitude test. From lists of occupations generated from their aptitude test results, users can link with information on careers, labor markets, and job listings. An interactive program, *Choices* can be self-administered, used for individualized counseling, or delivered in a group environment. One Center, in *Morrisville VT*, also provides access to a version of the program designed for youth, called *Choices JR*.

- *What Color is your Parachute?* provides self-directed career exploration and in-depth assessment in career interests and aptitudes. *Parachute* identifies several key steps to take prior to establishing a career objective. In identifying career goals, for example, the program prompts users to answer a number of questions related to job preferences and suggests that users do a series of essays to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This system was designed for both novice job seekers and those seeking a career change.
- *Sigi Plus* covers all the major aspects of career decision making and planning and consists of an introduction and eight core modules covering different steps in the career planning process. These modules include: an interest-based self-assessment; a search of occupations; information on occupations; a self-rating on the skills required for an occupation; information on training or education needed for specific occupations; preparing for a new career; deciding what career is right; and next steps, which includes resume writing capabilities and information on education or training opportunities.

Audio-Visual and Printed Materials

In addition to providing electronic access to career planning and assessment resources, many Centers make available written career assessment materials to customers. The Career Centers in our sample also maintain libraries of print and video materials related to careers. Several Centers, including the *Capital of Texas Workforce Center* in Austin TX and the *Workforce Center of Anoka County MN*, had sizeable collections of brief (8-12 minute) videos introducing customers to occupations, and longer videos focusing on career exploration.

In addition to electronic resources, Centers typically have libraries of print material and videos.

Center libraries also hold collections of books and reference materials related to career exploration. Larger collections—which can contain more than 30 titles on career planning and assessment—generally include standard works such as *Vocational Biographies* , the *Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance*, and *What Color is Your Parachute?* Among the more unique titles offered at some Centers include the following: *Making a Living While Making a Difference*; *Second Careers: New Ways to Work after 50*; and *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*.

Strategies to Assist Customers in Assessment and Career Planning

Some Resource Rooms include a staff member who has experience in vocational assessment and counseling. This individual is available to administer individual or group assessment instruments in hard-copy form and to provide assistance in interpreting the results. For example:

Some Centers also have trained vocational counselors, who offer testing and career guidance at no charge.

- In the *Bloomington IN Workforce Development Center*, a counselor offers free assessments using the COPS, CAPS, COPES system once a week and helps customers interpret the results.
- The *Workforce Development Center of Racine WI* has two vocational counselors on staff, who are available to meet with universal customers on an individual basis at no cost. One of these staff members has a Ph.D. in Counseling. Customers can meet with these counselors for assistance with electronic or hard-copy assessment tools and can make appointments to seek career guidance.

Most Centers in our sample also offer workshops open to the general public that are related to career planning and assessment. These workshops not only provide forums for the discussion of career planning and related topics, but also often provide instructions on the use of self-service electronic and printed resources:

Career exploration workshops, available at no charge, were very commo across the Centers we studied.

- The *Workforce Center of Anoka MN* offers an eighteen-hour Career Exploration workshop on three consecutive days that is focused on establishing realistic career goals. Workshop facilitators assist individuals with exploring careers, assessment, goal-setting, and the use of career resources. A separate four-hour *Self-Inventory* workshop introduces the use of self-assessment inventories and other methods used to determine a career focus.
- The *Racine WI Workforce Development Center's* three-hour Career Exploration workshop teaches participants to use the Center's computerized career resources. Other Center workshops cover topics such as motivation, creating a positive attitude, stress management, changing careers, developing a career track, and non-traditional occupations.

- The *Career Development Center of Renton, WA* offers an introductory workshop open to the general public on career planning.

Multiple Strategies to Assist Customers in Career Assessment and Counseling

The *Racine WA Workforce Development Center* has a separate Career Development Area with a battery of options for career planning and assessment, including both self-directed and staff-assisted resources. Its self-directed tools include *Career Visions*, which was developed by the State of Wisconsin and includes self-assessment modules on interests and aptitudes. Although fairly basic in its assessment tools, this software program provides customers with general career guidance. Also available is *Sigi Plus*, which consists of a basic self-assessment module and that links assessment results with information on specific occupations. Finally, the Racine WDC makes *OASYS* (Occupational Access System) available, which also offers assistance with career exploration and an analysis of the test-taker's transferable skills.

Among hard-copy resources, customers can use the *Self-Directed Search*, a test that can be self-administered and helps individuals find occupations that suit their interests and skills. Each test-taker receives a 15-page computer printout of the test results. Also available are the *Career Attitudes and Strategies Inventory*, which helps assess career obstacles, and the *General Aptitude Test Battery*, which assesses the individual's verbal aptitude, numerical aptitude, and spatial aptitude, among other skill domains, and thus helps the test-taker identify strengths and weaknesses as an aid in making career choices.

The WDC is unique in having two vocational counselors, who are on staff full-time in the Career Development Center. These counselors—one of whom has a Ph.D. in Counseling—are available to meet with the universal customer without charge to provide career guidance and interpret assessment results. The Center also offers nearly a dozen three-hour workshops on a range of topics related to career planning, including "Facing Fears of Success and Distress," "Developing a Career Track," "Changing Careers," "Non-traditional Occupations," "and Career Exploration" (which includes instruction in using computerized career-planning resources).

Special provisions are made for youth customers, including specialized career exploration software, such as *Career Ways*, a computerized portfolio and planning system, and *College View*, to

A list of the many workshops offered at the Racine WDC is provided in Appendix D.

assist youth in making college choices.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Self-Service Career Planning and Assessment Tools

Many of the best career-planning tools are quite sophisticated. But they have important limitations from the standpoint of self-services, including their complexity.

Self-assessment tools incorporate many of the techniques and principles developed over many years by career planning professionals. Many of these tools are becoming increasingly sophisticated and can provide job seekers with valuable insight and information concerning their career development. Moreover, many computerized career planning and assessment tools now allow customers to link their assessment results to information on occupations and providers of relevant education and training. Several Centers have also provided multiple options to customers, including making available separate assessment tools for subsets of customers, including adults, youth, and experienced workers.

There are however, some important factors to be considered when using self-service assessment and planning tools. Examples of concerns related to the use of these tools include the following:

- There is a tradeoff between the comprehensiveness of career planning and self-assessment programs and the time necessary to complete these programs. Assessment software that takes little time to complete, for example, does not provide the most reliable assessments. On the other hand, more comprehensive tools often take many hours to complete, and this can discourage customers from using them.
- Several of the software programs we reviewed lacked "user-friendliness." For example, some packages contain multiple sections or modules, and guidance on how to move between these sections is sometimes weaker than it should be.
- Although staff at many sites provide recommendations on which types of self-assessment and career planning programs are suited for their customers, other sites provided little such guidance. As a result, customers at these Centers may not understand which software programs are best suited to their needs.
- Customers are not always provided with adequate guidance concerning self-assessment tools and may not understand the differing assessment results that can occur depending on the assessment tools' emphasis on *interests, abilities,* or *aptitudes*. Nor can customers easily decipher the relation of these various factors to

Given the importance and complexity of career

career planning.

planning, customers can greatly benefit from the assistance of a trained professional.

Self-assessment and career planning tools should thus perhaps be best conceived of as *complementary* to, but not as *replacements* for, the services of professional career counselors, who are trained in interpreting assessment inventories and in providing career development advice. For this reason, One-Stop Centers have been reluctant to rely solely on self-services for assessment and career planning, and many thus feel the need to provide substantial staff assistance in the form of workshops, individualized career planning, and assistance in the interpretation of assessment results.

INFORMATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Consistent with the need for workers to become life-long learners, training and education beyond the high-school level has becoming a prerequisite for work in an increasing number of occupations. As a result, all One-Stop Centers should be able to provide customers with relevant and up-to-date information about education and training providers, particularly as these relate to customers' career goals.

Information on training providers is often conveniently bundled with electronic career planning software.

Most of the sites in our sample used electronic information systems developed by states or commercial vendors that provide links to educational and training institutions. Centers differ greatly, however, in the degree to which they offered customers useful, comprehensive, and well-maintained resource materials.

Electronic Resources

In most cases, electronic access to information on education and training providers is "bundled" with both commercial and state-sponsored assessment and career planning software. As described earlier, these systems typically allow users to complete a basic self-assessment, to obtain descriptive information and job requirements concerning occupations, and to obtain information on education and training institutions offering relevant programs of study.

For example, the commercially developed *Choices* program has an icon connecting to education and training programs offering courses related to occupations. The program lists schools throughout the nation and provides direct links to a variety of education programs offered at four-year colleges and community and technical schools.

Similarly, state-sponsored systems such as the *Indiana Career Information System* (ICIS) and Washington's *Occupational Information System* (WOIS) provide specific information on educational opportunities.

In other examples, *Texas CARES* provides high school and first-time job seekers with specific information on colleges and universities, proprietary schools, and training and apprenticeship programs. Users of *Wisconsin's Career Visions* database of U.S. colleges and technical/vocational schools can sort schools or colleges by specific programs of study, tuition limits, and geographic regions. *Minnesota's Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge* (ISEEK), which was under construction at the time of the site visit, will link all information on educational offerings and programs, as well as information on occupations, skill requirements and job openings.

The *Career Development Center of Renton WA* provides electronic access to education and training information in two ways: through the *Washington Occupational Information System* (WOIS), which provides information on education and training providers in the state, linked to the skills required of various occupations; and through access to *Pederson's* national database of education and training providers. This latter program can sort schools based on a variety of criteria, including geographic area, specific ethnic focus (e.g. historically black colleges and universities), and program of study.

Centers also often have printed materials on training providers, including brochures and catalogs, but keeping this material organized is difficult.

Printed Materials

All of the Centers in our sample have sections within Resource Rooms with at least some materials on education and training providers—these generally include course catalogues for local universities, colleges, and technical schools. In several sites, however, these materials are not systematically collected or arranged and are often out-of-date. In contrast, other One-Stop Centers have large, well maintained, and up-to-date collections. The *Anoka Center* , for example has a well stocked collection of materials that includes the following:

- Current brochures and catalogues from *technical colleges* across the state.
- Catalogues, brochures, and bulletins, and the degree offerings for *community colleges and other postsecondary schools* in Minnesota and neighboring

states.

- Catalogues and brochures describing local and area *training programs and apprenticeships* , many of which are for specific occupations.
- Information on *financial aid* including general books and catalogs on scholarship and financial aid applications in Minnesota.

Assessing Effective Practices and Areas for Potential Improvement

Several of the electronic tools available at One-Stop Centers offer innovative features that allow users to easily access information on education and training opportunities. Some of these useful features are as follows:

- As mentioned earlier, several software packages used at One-Stop Centers provide users with links between assessment results and information on education and training providers.
- Some software packages also provide comprehensive information on post-secondary and training institutions within their respective states and nationwide.
- Several programs allow users to sort by region, area of study, tuition rates, and other relevant factors.
- Several sites provide ratings on the quality of education and training providers. In particular, the *Workforce Center of Anoka County MN* and *The Capital of Texas Workforce Center in Austin TX* both offer customer access to state consumer report systems (CRS) that provide assessments of vocational-technical and college programs. Obviously, ratings of this sort can greatly improve the customers' ability to make wise choices with respect to the selection of a provider.

Not many Centers were able to provide ratings of the quality of training providers, at least at the time of our site visits.

At the same time, there exists room for improving the quality and accessibility of information at many Centers. Among the weaknesses:

- In some Centers, printed materials concerning education and training opportunities are sparse, out-of-date, and poorly organized.
- Most of the sites in our sample provided no quality rating data on education and training providers (although they will doubtless move to do so given

strictures in the new Workforce Investment Act).

Most Centers offered access to loads of materials related to LMI. But customers usually don't know how to make good use of them.

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

All sites offer individual customers access to a variety of labor market information in both electronic and printed form. Most typically, electronic LMI was available through a state-developed web page that is in turn linked to America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS). Resource libraries also contain sections devoted to LMI, which include both reference materials and narrative reports and publications on labor markets. Most Centers also provide workshops that touch on LMI at least briefly.

Electronic Resources and Print Materials

All Centers provide access to state web pages that provide labor market information. Examples of the types of LMI accessible through Internet links to state web pages are as follows:

- At the *Racine WI WDC*, customers use computers in the Resource Room, Career Development Center, or the Career Discovery Center to access labor market information on the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development web page (www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwelmi/). Customers can, for example, review *county profiles* that offer information on population and civilian labor force growth, commuting patterns, employment change by industry, largest industries and employers, and employment and wage information.
- The *Anoka MN Workforce Center* provides links to the state's Department of Economic Security Internet web site (www.des.state.mn.us/lmi/), which provides information on programs, services, and LMI. Customers can access information on labor market conditions, as well as labor and supply for selected "hot" careers. Customers can also access an electronic version of the *Minnesota Careers* publication, which is designed for both students and adults, that discusses employment prospects and educational requirements.
- In the *Renton WA CDC*, all computers have labor market information from the Washington Occupation Information System (www.wois.org), a state database that provides information on occupations, educational requirements, and schools. Customers can also access

a new database developed by Washington State Employment Security called the Washington Interactive Labor Market Access (www.wilma.org), which contains a variety of LMI, including employer contact information for disaggregated sub-state labor markets.

- *The Work Place of Boston MA*, in addition to providing access to the state's web page, has purchased CD-based products containing relevant labor market information, including *Business Base* and *American Business Information*, which provide information about specific industries, skill requirements, wage information, and projected growth of small and large companies.

Resource Centers also typically make available hard-copy publications, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*. Other publications used in Resource Centers include the *Directory of Manufacturers*, the *Corporate Report Fact Book*, and the *Directory of Occupational Terms*. Some Centers also offer publications with more engaging titles. These include books such as *America's 50 Fastest Growing Jobs, Where the Jobs Are,* and *100 Best Careers for the 21st Century*.

Customer Workshops and Staff Assistance

In many Centers, staff lack specific training in LMI, and this fact limits the extent to which the information can be used effectively. In an exception that demonstrates the important of staff assistance, the *Anoka County Workforce Center's* in-house expertise in using LMI was cited as an important factor in encouraging customer use. At Anoka, a state labor market "liaison" works full-time in the Center and provides training and support for counselors and resource area personnel in guiding customers in the use of LMI. Staff workshops and orientations, which are open to all, focus on the importance of LMI for customers who are seeking new jobs or preparing for careers. The liaison also assists staff in the development of career exploration workshops and providing specific information used in these workshops.

Some other Centers also offer workshops open to the universal customer that touch on LMI. In some Centers, these are general workshops that discuss LMI among many other topics. In other cases, Centers provide workshops that deal specifically with using LMI resources. In general, these workshops acquaint customers with basic

LMI research techniques and encourage the use of LMI resources. An example of a general workshop that encompasses a discussion of LMI is offered at the *Melbourne Job Link Center of Brevard FL*; this three-hour workshop, called the *Hidden Job Market: Where the Jobs Are*, introduces users to LMI resources, including occupational outlook reference materials.

The *Capital of Texas (Austin) Workforce Center* and *The Boston Work Place* both offer workshops devoted exclusively to LMI. Boston's fee-based workshop introduces the use of LMI resources to facilitate the job search process and career exploration. At the Austin Center, the LMI workshop focuses on the use of LMI within the context of the changing workplace and growing occupations. This latter workshop also makes use of materials developed at the Center, such as the *Monthly Labor Market Information*, that summarizes employment opportunities and trends in various "demand" areas and provides information about local private sector jobs in various occupations.

Customers are often bewildered by the masses of LMI that is available

Assessment of the Adequacy of LMI

As mentioned above, all sites offer individual customers access to a variety of electronic and printed labor market information. In fact, the problem in some sense is that too much information is available with not enough attention paid to how customers should use it. Thus, in general customers do not know how to adequately use the available LMI to assist in their job search or career planning.

Among the other barriers to effective use of LMI at One-Stop Centers are the following:

- The geographic aggregate of data is not always specific enough to be useful for those seeking careers within a limited geographic area.
- Data are not always up-to-date.

In examples of effective practices, in which staff and customers indicated that LMI information was useful—and *used* by customers—the following factors were cited as important:

- LMI is *up-to-date* and *easy to use*.
- LMI is *well integrated* into workshops for customers, which clearly describe the benefits of using labor market information and how to do so.

- *Staff competence* in the use of LMI is systematically developed at the Center level.

Along these lines, the extent to which LMI is adapted to the specific needs of the customer base and the "user-friendliness" of LMI strongly influences customer use. Examples of efforts at the level of the Center or service delivery area (SDA) to make LMI more accessible include the following:

- The *Bloomington IN Workforce Development Center* posts LMI on its bulletin boards. The Center also distributes a one-page document published by the state that lists on-line career information sites and resources, organized by career fields, and job listings.
- At the *Melbourne Job Link Center in Brevard County FL*, a "Workforce Organizer" binder, located at each computer station, guides customers to various Internet sites. In the section on LMI, customers can find sites providing information on employment trends, salaries, local industries and other occupational information. Information specific to Brevard County includes the result of the employer survey from the 1997 Census of Employers, which gives detailed information on occupations, salaries, and demand and job openings.
- At the *Anoka MN* Center, a labor market liaison "localizes" information on wages, employers, occupations and employment outlooks. As a result, Center staff and customers have easy access to a variety of regional and local information concerning demographics, wages, unemployment, and industry trends. The regional LMI liaison also prepares a quarterly newsletter, available in both print and electronic versions, that is mailed to employers and other interested parties.

The pervasiveness of electronic job listings has had a profound effect on the job search process.

JOB LISTINGS AND JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

In most cases, when a customer who is currently unemployed or seeking to change careers enters a Career Center, it is with a view toward finding suitable employment within the shortest time period possible. It should therefore not be surprising that access to job listings is a popular feature of One-Stop Career Centers.

Much has happened over the past decade—and particularly within the last five years—to distinguish the job search process from that typically encountered at "unemployment offices" in earlier periods. Certainly, one of the greatest changes in the job search process has been the remarkably swift development of electronic media for recruiting job applicants. America's Job Bank (AJB), for example, typically contains over 900,000 job listings at any one time and receives many millions of "hits" from job-seekers per year.

In addition to government-funded sites, such as AJB and the state employment service job banks that contribute to its listings, there are many hundreds of other electronic sites listing job openings. Some of these electronic services target specific geographic localities; others are oriented to specific categories of employment (e.g., electrical engineering and computer programming, managerial, etc.); and still other job listing services encompass the range of occupations and geographic locations.

Because of the rapid growth of electronic job banks, the trend toward self-directed job search is becoming increasingly important. As we describe below, however, assisted or mediated job search and job-matching services still remain an important aspect of the services at most One-Stops. The following sections detail the use and availability of labor market exchange tools, including (1) Employment Service and public job banks; (2) other job listing resources; (3) printed materials, including classified advertisements, printed job postings, and job-listing binders; and (4) strategies to enhance the job search.

Public Job Banks and Employment Services

State job listings still have the reputation for having a preponderance of entry-level positions and a dearth of positions for well-educated job seekers.

All of the Centers offer their customers access to Employment Services job banks either via Internet connection, through dedicated terminals, or through a combination of both media. In many of these systems, job listings are posted in the following categories: (1) managerial and professional; (2) clerical and administrative support; (3) sales and marketing; (4) service; (5) farming, forestry and fishing; (6) skilled trades; (7) operators, assemblers, processors, laborers, and drivers; (8) part-time and temporary positions.

Examples of job-listing systems that are available through dedicated systems at Career Centers or are available (or soon to be operational) via the Internet, include the following:

- In the *Bloomington IN Workforce Development Center, ALEX* is the job search vehicle of choice and can be accessed for local and state-wide jobs. Individuals use this system to search and print out job listings, then confer with ES staff to determine if they have the requisite skills for the advertised position. ALEX is available through dedicated terminals at the Center and through PC connection to the state's web page via Internet.

- At the *Racine WI Workforce Development Center*, thirteen *JobNet* terminals are available in the Resource Room. These terminals are provided by the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and are connected to a state network. JobNet is a touch-screen system that allows individuals to review job openings in different areas of the state. This system can also be accessed through the Internet.
- At the *Renton WA Career Development* Center, there are three dedicated terminals for Washington State's *JobNet*, the Employment Security database with information on job openings. Customers must be registered to utilize the JobNet system. ES staff are available to register customers on a walk-in basis. A new Internet-based version of the system that will contain unsuppressed listings was under construction at the time of the site visit and is now accessible through the state's home page (www.wa.gov/esd).

Staff evinced a willingness to do "whatever it takes" to get jobs for customers, regardless of whether they would officially receive "credit."

Despite the rapid "electronification" of public job listing systems, job matching continues to remain a major function for Employment Service staff at One-Stop Centers. This is partly due to the fact that job bank listings—depending on the employer's preference—can either be "suppressed" or "unsuppressed." With suppressed listings, employers require that ES staff review the job seeker's qualifications before making a job referral. On the other hand, unsuppressed listings allow job seekers to contact employers directly. As we describe in greater detail in the chapter on employer services, many employers prefer to have Employment Services staff make job matches and refer candidates. Some job seekers, particularly those with lower levels of education or computer skills, also prefer to rely on staff advice for job matching.

Some states, however, are rapidly pushing for a move away from mediated job services toward a system in which unsuppressed listings will constitute the majority. Minnesota's Department of Economic Security (MDES), for example, is concentrating efforts on developing an "open" system, through which as many as 80% of job orders will be unsuppressed by the year 2000.

In addition to publicly supported job listings, there are hundreds of privately developed listings on the Internet.

Other Job Search and Listing Resources

Employment Service job bank listings contain only a portion of available job openings in any given locality. Moreover, in many areas, ES listings tend to be more oriented toward entry-level or semi-skilled jobs. For these reasons—together with the fact that there are now so many other electronically accessible options for job seekers—Career Centers actively promote customers' use of alternative job listing services. In all of the sites in our sample, Career Centers offer customers access to a range of other databases and job listing services, even though Employment Services staff in Career Centers do not necessarily receive "credit" for these job matches.

Centers "bookmark" promising web sites to assist customers in the job search process.

Several Centers and state agencies facilitate this process by providing Internet "bookmarks" or Internet links to relevant job-listing sources. Some sites also provide customers with printed guides to popular Internet job search sites. Examples of effective practices using these strategies are detailed below:

- Internet job listings at the *Racine WI WDC* can be accessed through the PCs in their Resource Room, Career Development Center, and Career Discovery Center (youth center). One Resource Room staff member has created an internal web page that appears whenever customers access the Internet from the WDC (this web page cannot be accessed remotely via the Internet). This internal web page contains links to about 200 sites, including *America's Job Bank* and the *Wisconsin Job Net*.

The Renton CDC has an annotated listing of web sites relating to job search. See Appendix D for a copy.

- At *The Work Place in Boston MA*, more than 50 Internet-based job banks are "bookmarked" on each computer terminal and categorized by local area, company name, and specific industry. Many of these bookmarked sites also allow users to complete short self-assessment surveys.
- Staff at the *Renton WA Career Development Center* have prepared an annotated listing of helpful web sites for job search assistance or job listings, all of which are bookmarked on six computers in an "Internet room." These include links to the Employment Security Department and other Washington State resources; "Best Bets" including *America's Job Bank* (AJB), *Career Mosaic*, and the *Monster Board*; company listings; and job directories. (A sample of

Centers also make hard-copy job listings available, including newspapers and "Hot Jobs" posted on bulletin boards. Some these annotated listings is contained in Appendix D).

customers are more comfortable accessing information this way.

Printed Materials

In addition to providing access to electronic resources, Career Centers also provide job listings in a number of printed formats. Staff at many Centers view providing printed job listings as crucial, particularly for Center users who are less familiar with computer systems. Also, particularly in those Centers that have witnessed a rapid increase in demand for computer usage, printed listings can offer an important alternative for customers when all computers are occupied. As the examples below indicate, many Centers continue to provide current job listings on bulletin boards and in folders, and also provide customers with access to classified advertisements:

- At the *Capital of Texas Workforce Center in Austin*, a large "Hot Jobs" bulletin board displays job orders to be filled immediately, contact information for local employers and staffing agencies who consistently hire, and other job-search information such as flyers announcing job fairs and job search workshops. Beneath the bulletin board are job listings binders that are updated daily. The Center also subscribes to various local and area newspapers, including the *Job Source*, a reprint of local area Sunday want ads.
- At *The Work Place in Boston MA*, a "Hot Jobs" listing with immediate hiring potential is updated daily and is displayed on the bulletin board in the library. Job listings by industry and type of employment are also posted on the Center's library bulletin board and job listings are compiled in binders by the day of the week the opening was announced.
- The *Melbourne Job Link Center in Brevard County FL* subscribes to a dozen local, state and national newspapers and to a microfiche service that contains the Sunday want ads from 65 newspapers. Job listing binders are regularly updated to provide information on the latest job openings. Center staff also provide customers with lists of telephone numbers for local hotline job listings for each area.

Books and videos provide a good mechanism for customers to brush up on their job search and interviewing skills.

Self-service libraries also generally contain a variety of books, brochures, and video materials related to the job search. Examples include the following:

- The *Renton WA CDC* Resource Library contains over 50 printed titles related to job search strategies and assistance. General information books include such titles as: *101 Great Answers to the Toughest Interview Questions* and *The Only Job Hunting Guide You'll Ever Need*. Books with local job hunting information include the *Seattle JobBank, 989 Great Part-Time Jobs in Seattle*, and the *Seattle Metro Business Directory*. Some books are targeted for special populations such as *100 Best Companies for Gay Men and Lesbians* and *Job Strategies for People with Disabilities*.

- The *Bloomington IN Workforce Development Center's* library holds a collection of about 30 job search titles including: *Job Search Strategies*, *Getting the Job You Really Want*, and *The Only Job Hunting Guide You'll Ever Need*. Video titles include: *Tips for the Successful Interview*, and *Knowing Your Skills*.
- The *Anoka MN Workforce Center's* video section contains more than 25 titles on job search and interviewing techniques, covering topics such as general materials on finding a job, using the telephone, and other means of effective communications. Some titles are also available in Spanish.

Workshops on job search techniques and Job Clubs provide additional very valuable guidance and support for the job seeker.

Providing Job Search Assistance

Apart from the publications described above, Career Centers provide job seekers with other opportunities to enhance their job search skills and to transition to a self-directed job search. Centers generally employ two complementary strategies toward these goals, namely workshops and job clubs. Examples of these two strategies are discussed below.

Workshops. All of the Centers in the sample offer workshops related to job search that are available to the universal customer. Centers generally offer both *introductory* sessions, which provide an overview of the job search process, and *follow-up* workshops, which are focused on specific aspects of the job search: Workshops are designed to increase customer knowledge of job search techniques and to provide knowledge and understanding of the use of self-service options. Some examples of workshops in the sampled Centers are as follows:

- The *Racine WI WDC* offers numerous workshops to assist customers with the job search process, including the following: *Turn a Cold Call into a Hot Lead*, which focuses on how to use the telephone as an effective job search tool; *Job Searching by the*

Internet; *Answering Tough Interview Questions*; and *Written Communication* which describes techniques for effective communication and expression that will help individuals find jobs.

- "Guided services" in *Renton WA's CDC* include a four-hour introductory workshop, called *Essential First Step* that includes an overview of Washington's *JobNet* job matching system. The Center also offers follow-up workshops, including one entitled *Job Search Strategies*, which assists customers learn to create job search goals, access labor market information, and develop job hunting strategies. An *Internet Workshop* also provides an orientation to the Internet and highlights helpful career exploration and job search web sites.
- At the *Anoka MN* Center, all customers can participate in the following workshops designed to improve search techniques: *The Creative Job Search Workshop*, which provides an introduction to the process of finding a job, followed by a series of half-day job search modular workshops on particular subjects such as *Job Applications and References*; the *Employer Telephone Connection*, on using the telephone effectively to contact employers; and *Resources and Reference Books* and *Company Contact List*, both of which provide information on how to access Resource Center information for the job search.

Job Clubs provide emotional support for the job seeker, as well as facilitating the peer-to-peer exchange of "hot tips."

Job Clubs. Job clubs are a staff-supported activity that allows job seekers to share job leads, to participate in mock interview and critique sessions, and to exchange experiences with their peers concerning the job search process. In addition, they provide participants with an important support structure during what is often a critical phase of their lives. In many cases, job clubs are also designed to facilitate the transition to self-services, particularly for participants in categorically funded programs such as welfare-to-work. Five of the eight Centers in our sample held on-site weekly job clubs that were open to the general public. Examples of job club activities are as follows:

- At the *Capital of Texas Workforce Center in Austin TX*, "Success Team" is a job search club led by Center job developers as a follow up to an introductory workshop. The job club allows participants to network and exchange information, and facilitators use the job club to assist participants to review and suggest modifications to resumes.

- In *Renton WA*, in addition to job clubs for the categorically-funded and the general public, the Center also provides space to the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers' Center for Administering Rehabilitation and Employment Services (IAM CARES), which provides job clubs and programs for individuals with disabilities.

Given the innumerable web sites with job listings, customers can be more efficient in their job search if Centers provide some guidance on sites worth checking out.

Effective Practices for Job Search Assistance

One-Stop Career Centers offer customer access to a tremendous array of self-service job listings. In addition to providing access to Employment Service job banks, both through dedicated terminals and increasingly through Internet sites, Centers also allow customers to access any of the literally hundreds of other proprietary electronic sites providing job openings.

Having a multitude of choices, however, also presents specific problems. For example, given the array of options, how can customers know which job-listing service is most likely to provide them with the information that will lead to the best employment opportunities? Where are they most likely to find information on jobs in their local areas? Several of the effective practices that respond to these questions include the following:

- *The availability of clear guides to electronic sites containing job-listings.* Some sites, such *The Work Place in Boston MA*, have created well-organized Internet "bookmarks" that lead customers to job-listing services. Other examples of innovative practice include the distribution of printed annotated guides to web pages in *Renton WA*.
- *The accessibility of a wide range of printed materials related to employment possibilities.* Examples of such practices are subscriptions to a wide variety of newspapers, collections of employment listings such as those offered by microfiche services, and reference areas with well-stocked libraries on job search.
- *Providing multiple ways to access public job listings.* These can include posting "Hot Jobs" listings, providing separate listings by industry or type of employment, and providing customers with access to well-organized job listing binders or lists of local employers that hire frequently.
- *Providing instruction on the use of self-service job-*

search tools and on job-search or interviewing techniques. Most Centers offer an ongoing series of workshops and support groups, such as job clubs, that complement the self-directed job search and allow customers to better use the available self-service options and to improve their job search skills. Additional materials that have proven useful include books and videos.

- *Having knowledgeable and accessible staff*. Staff availability, their knowledge about the range of job-listing services, and their willingness to "go the extra mile" to assist customers to find suitable employment, are consistently regarded by One-Stop customers as extremely important aspects of One-Stop services.

Resources and Tools to Assist with the Job Search

The *Career Development Center in Renton, WA* provides a variety of tools to assist customers with the job search process. To begin with, it has three dedicated terminals for Washington State's JobNet system, the Employment Security database with listings of job openings; it hopes to have an Internet-based version of this system, with unsuppressed listings, on line shortly. Apart from accessing the state job listings, customers can also access a variety of other job listings on any of the six computers with Internet access. To facilitate the process of identifying relevant web sites, the CDC has developed an annotated listing of relevant sites, with a "Best Bets" section, additional listings for companies in the local area or in particular industries, and a directory of sites with information on the job search process in general (*A copy of this annotated list is included in this Report in Appendix D)*. Hot job leads are also posted on a series of bulletin boards in the Resource Room.

Renton also has a library in the Resource Room that contains over 50 volumes relating to the job search process. Titles include strategies for effective job hunting and tips for successful interviewing. Videos are also available, enabling customers to witness effective practices with respect to the job search.

These self-service tools are augmented by staff-assisted services. For example, Renton offers a number of workshops that help customers improve the effectiveness of their job search, including *Job Search Strategies,* which covers how to develop job search goals and access relevant information. Additional workshops of relevance include one on accessing job listings on the Internet and another on withstanding the emotional trauma associated with career transitions. Job clubs provide additional support to the job seeker.

Finally, customers benefit by being able to pursue job leads by

Resources for preparing resumes and cover letters are among the most highly valued services.

using the Center's telephones, fax machine, and photocopier.

SELF-SERVICES FOR RESUME AND COVER LETTER PREPARATION

In addition to job listings, the most popular services at Career Centers are those that assist in the preparation and diffusion of resumes and cover letters. Most of the self-service tools available for this purpose are oriented toward customers with at least some computer skills and familiarity with the principles of resume and cover letter preparation. In contrast, first-time job seekers and those who are applying for their first job in many years typically require more assistance in resume and cover letter preparation. This additional assistance can be provided through workshops and one-on-one assistance.

Preparing and Posting Resumes

Most Centers offer customers a choice among at least two options for preparing resumes. As the first option, Centers provide access to recent versions of standard word-processing packages, such as *Microsoft Word* and *WordPerfect,* both of which contain resume templates.

In addition, Centers also provide customers with access to software that is dedicated to resume writing. The most commonly used software package in our sample, *WinWay Resume,* is available in six of the eight Centers in our sample. This package provides tutorials on writing resumes and cover letters, and includes a resume template that can later be downloaded into popular word-processing packages, such as Microsoft Word. The program also provides examples of resumes according to job title, vocabulary lists of keywords most commonly used in resumes, and tips on interviewing and effective responses to common interview questions. Other software packages available at some Centers, such as *Instant Resume,* contain similar features. However, because users are prompted to fill in information, these systems do not import resumes that were created in different formats.

A matrix of resume preparation programs available at Centers is included in Figure V-2, below.

Figure V-2
Resume Packages Currently Recommended for Use at Career Centers

Resume Packages	FL	IN	MA	MN	TX	VT	WA	WI
Damn Good Resumes		X						
Instant Resume		X						X
Microsoft Word Templates	X	X		X				
Ready to Go		X						
Resume and Job Search Pro		X						
WinWay Resume	X		X		X	X	X	X
WordPerfect Templates		X		X				
Yana Parker					X			

Note: The matrix includes only those packages that have been recommended by Center staff.

Respondents at several of the sites in our sample, including those in Renton and Anoka, indicated that they encouraged customers to post their resumes on *America's Talent Bank* (ATB), and they provide resources to assist in this as well. At the Renton Center, for example, staff have prepared three handouts pertaining to preparing and sending electronic resumes. The Boston Center has also developed a local talent bank.

At many Centers, customers are also given assistance in posting their resumes on electronic listings, such as ATB.

- At the *Renton WA Career Development Center*, customers expressing interest in posting electronic resumes are provided with the following handouts: *Creating an electronic resume*, which gives tips for preparing an attractive electronic resume; *Sending your resume by e-mail*, which provides step-by-step instructions on sending a resume via Netscape Navigator; and *Preparing a scannable resume* , which details the necessary steps for preparing a resume in a specific format for ease of reading by an optical scanner.
- Staff at *The Boston Work Place* have developed a local talent bank, called *Career Maker,* which was being reviewed by the Massachusetts DOL's Workforce Development Department for potential distribution to all Career Centers in the state with One-Stop funding. Although the system was still being refined at the time

of the site visit, it was expected that it would eventually both increase the speed and accuracy with which staff could identify qualified candidates and make referrals, as well as generate data on the needs of the employers and the skills and abilities of its job seeker customers.

Printed Materials

In addition to electronic resources, Centers also generally provide a number of printed reference materials in their libraries. The following examples illustrate the types of materials available:

- The *Austin TX Center's* library contains 15 books on resume writing, including the *Knock 'em Dead* and *Damn Good Resumes* series. A new SOICC's publication, called the *Texas Job Hunter's Guide*, also includes resume development tips.
- The *Morrisville VT* Center distributes a state-developed brochure entitled *How to Write a Winning Resume*. This brochure provides suggestions for highlighting individual skills and backgrounds, and lists key action verbs commonly used in resumes. It also includes worksheets on work history, skills acquired, hobbies, education, and personal characteristics. Sample resumes, including chronological, functional, combined chronological and functional, and targeted functional, are included. The brochure ends with suggestions for writing effective cover letters.

Workshops and Assistance with Resumes and Cover Letters

Workshops offer an important complement to self-service options for resume and cover letter preparation. All of the Centers in our sample offer workshops on resume preparation—seven on a regular basis—and at one smaller Center (Morrisville) on an "as-needed" basis. Because workshops are primarily designed to enhance skills, many of them provide "hands-on" experience using resume packages, which encourages the use of self-services outside of workshops. Brief summaries of workshops available at some Centers for the universal customer and at no cost are as follows:

Workshops that provided tips on preparing effective resumes are also popular. These workshops also provide an introduction to the resume-preparation software packages.

- Many of the workshops and group activities at the *Austin TX Center* involve some assistance in developing resumes. For example, participants are introduced to the basics of resume and cover letter writing in the Career Trek workshop. Additionally, at the weekly "Success Team" job club meetings, facilitators use some of the time to review resumes and to suggest modifications. At regular intervals, the Center also offers a workshop entitled Job Search Correspondence: Resumes and Cover Letters.

- In a two-hour workshop called *How to Create a Resume,* staff at *The Boston Work Place* review the key features of effective resume development and provide instructions on the use of *WinWay Resume* software.
- The *Melbourne Job Link Center in Brevard County FL* offers two workshops, entitled *Packaging Your Skills: Cover Letters, Resumes and Thank-yous*, and *Master Your Application and References,* both of which provide information about developing effective resumes.
- The *Racine WI WDC* has a three-hour workshop, called *Resumes and Cover Letters,* that focuses on preparing professional resumes, and another three-hour workshop on using the *Instant Resume* program to create a resume. These two workshops are offered every two to three weeks.
- The *Renton WA CDC* offers two workshops: *Designing Your Resume #1* is a four-hour introductory workshop that teaches customers how to create resumes and cover letters; and *Perfecting Your Resume #2* is a four-hour follow-up workshop that instructs customers on more advanced techniques to refine their resume and cover letters.

In addition to workshops, all Centers provide some individualized assistance with resume preparation. Resume writing programs such as *Instant Resume* and *WinWay* programs are popular and effective for customers with some computer skills. Both programs allow users to "fill in the blanks" when prompted, and use this information to create formatted resumes. Customers with little experience in using computers, however, still require some one-on-one assistance with resume writing. For this reason, all One-Stop Centers offer one-on-one services to some degree. This is illustrated in the following example from Racine:

Customers who appear to be having difficulty with the resume-preparation software are commonly given individualized assistance.

- Staff in the *Racine WI* Resource Room assist customers with resume preparation so that customers "have a product that is truly representational of their skills." Typically, customers who have little exposure to using computers, or who have never prepared a resume, receive a greater degree of staff assistance. Each day, one of four staff members in the Resource Room devotes about one and a half hours to assisting customers prepare resumes. Customers with little computer experience are also referred to the Center's Academic Improvement Center, where they can develop computer skills.

Assessment of Adequacy of Resume Self-Services

By providing access to computerized resume-writing packages, Centers provide many opportunities for computer-literate customers to create well-crafted resumes. Self-service resume technologies do however have some weaknesses, which are detailed below:

- Popular resume programs, such as WinWay, often do not allow users to import resumes created in other formats. Individuals with existing resumes must therefore re-enter all information when they use these programs.
- Resume programs are often difficult for novices. For example, key fields on the resume template, such as name, experience, education, are all accessed by double-clicking on a mouse—an action that is taken for granted by experienced computer users, but one that can pose difficulty for novice users. For this reason, staff at many Centers indicated that they often help customers create resumes. In that case, however, this "self-service" resource is not really being utilized as such.

In addition to providing access to self-service resume preparation assistance, many Centers have adopted effective practices combining self- and assisted- resume writing services that include the following:

- In most Centers, customers have many opportunities to have their resumes critiqued in group and one-on-one settings.
- Several Centers assist customers in creating and distributing "electronic" resumes. One Center, *Boston MA,* has developed its own electronic talent bank.

Linking Career Exploration, Assessment, and Job Search

The *Renton Career Development Center* combines a variety of self-directed and assisted approaches to link the career exploration and job search process. Self-directed resources include computerized assessment programs, such as Sigi Plus and WOIS, as well as numerous books and videos in the Resource Library. Also helpful for career planning is the Center's extensive materials relating to LMI, which help identify high-growth sectors of the economy. For those interested in undertaking training, the Center has a national database of education and training providers, as well as catalogs and brochures for local providers. The Center also has numerous self-service resources to help with the job search, including links to federal, state, and non-government web pages with job listings, along with an annotated list of "bookmarked" sites. An electronic resource under construction by Washington Employment Security, called WILMA (Washington Interactive Labor Market Access), will not only have lots of LMI, but also will include an array of information relevant to the job search, including listings of employers in specific industries in specific cities or counties. Help with resume preparation is available from software packages as well as from videos and print material that provide useful advice on putting together a winning resume and interviewing effectively.

The effectiveness of these self-services is greatly enhanced by an array of assisted-services, which help orient customers to the available resources and provide assistance to their use. *Essential First Step* is an example of a workshop that encourages effective use of self-services; this four-hour session provides an overview of Washington's JobNet job matching system and helps customers assess their own skills and strengths as job seekers. Similarly, CDC Services is a one-hour workshop that provides an overview of all services available in the Center and includes a tour of the facility; each participant also receives a folder describing services and resources. Additional workshops relate to the job search, accessing the Internet, and designing one's resume. Staff are also available to provide individualized assistance, on an as-needed basis.

VI. SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

This chapter reviews a variety of services that are generally provided to employers in the Resource Room context, identifying those that employers may access on their own, or with the minimal assistance from Center staff. We also discuss the contextual factors that continue to influence how services are currently delivered, as well as sites' future plans.

To provide an in-depth look at self-service delivery mechanisms used by One-Stop systems, information on self-directed services for the employer community was gathered during the site visits using several methods. First, Center staff described their range of employer services and the rationale for their selections. Second, One-Stop leadership discussed *how* and by *whom* employer services were delivered. Finally, SPR site visitors interviewed employers, who commented on existing services and the kinds of services they were most in need of, given the current employment environment.

Employers seem reluctant to embrace self-services and seek personalized attention.

Typically, at the time of the site visits, One-Stop Centers were concentrating on developing their range of self-services and resources for universal customers—some had been in business as One-Stops for only a year or so—with the intention of slowly expanding and marketing employer self-service options in the coming months. While most One-Stop sites exhibited a wide range of services for employers, many were staff-facilitated, since many employers seem reluctant to use on-site services. For example, the One-Stop director at the *Morrisville Career Resource Center* indicated that, in their small town atmosphere, where people knew each other, self-directed services for employers did not have much appeal. On the other hand, at the *Boston Work Place* and the *Anoka County Workforce Center* in Minnesota, One-Stop leadership is aggressively pursuing self-services for employers. Other sites indicated that, to varying degrees, they were implementing some self-directed services for employers, but also investigating other strategies that might eventually (down the road) allow employers to access more information and services on their own. For example, One-Stop Center staff sometimes took laptops to employers' work places and taught them how to access and sign up for America's Job Bank.

Partnering with local business organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, can help One-Stop Centers design and market self-services to employers.

Sites that wanted to allow employers some latitude in how they accessed services developed "service tiers," dividing services into self-directed and *assisted* or *facilitated* self-service categories. Other innovations consisted of partnering with local business-oriented organizations—such as Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Departments—to assist the One-Stop Centers to market their new services to employers. Some sites also employed individuals from these business-led organizations to deliver and develop services beyond the traditional labor exchange services typically offered by the Employment Service.

Environmental factors also impacted how decision-makers were shaping their employer services in the One-Stop setting. External factors influenced decisions as to which services would be provided and which could be presented in a self- or minimally-assisted environment. For example, the low unemployment rate (ranging from 2%-4% in the communities we visited) was an important factor in how—and which—services were provided to employers. Another factor was the ability of the One-Stop system to effectively utilize technology to enhance self-accessed services, coupled with the level of sophistication and willingness of local employers to utilize these technologies. Finally, as has been noted in other One-Stop implementation research, traditions and images "die hard." Most employers still expect that the public labor exchange system will continue to provide them with one-on-one services and are somewhat reluctant to investigate other, less staff-intensive services.

SELF-DIRECTED AND ASSISTED SELF-SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS

Electronic linkages have greatly enhanced the ability of employers to post job orders and access information about job seekers.

Technology has made information and services more accessible to all customers—for job seekers as well as employers. All states represented in this study have developed web pages, available on the Internet. Local One-Stop Centers are also connected to their states' job matching systems and to the Internet. In addition, a number of SDAs, counties, and local communities have also established web pages. These electronic linkages have greatly expanded the ability of employers that have Internet access to electronically post job orders, access databases of job seekers, and obtain labor market and other business-related information. However, beyond these technology-dependent services, local sites differ in their approach to the business community, the information and the services they provide, and how they deliver these services. Aware that employers still prefer to be "served" by a staff person, study sites made an attempt to provide an array of services that would give employers the staff support they needed, while giving them the latitude to access services and information on their own when this made sense. Moreover, many Centers were developing strategies for transitioning employers from assisted to self-services. For example, an employer may need some initial assistance from staff, but at a later date, may be capable of completing or engaging in the activity on their own.

Recruitment and Screening Strategies

Posting electronic job orders. It is now common practice for employers to be able to reach a large number of potential applicants with the placement of one job order—a significant improvement over the prior system. All sites allow employers to post a job order by telephone or fax. These job orders are then placed on the state's job matching system, thereby making the employer's vacancies and employment requirements known to job seekers across the state. States also place employer job orders on America's Job Bank (AJB), thus making it possible for an employer's initial submittal to be broadcast nationwide.

Employers have the option of recruiting for job applicants either electronically or by on-site recruitment.

Most states represented in the study also provided electronic on-line access, so employers can post job orders and access job seeker applicants. Similarly, some counties and communities represented in the study have established local web sites allowing local employers to post their job orders to the local One-Stop Center, and access databases of local job seekers.

To facilitate self-services, most sites are already allowing job seekers to contact some employers directly, or vice versa. In most sites, therefore, the employers can stipulate whether the job seeker is able to contact them directly or must first be approved for referral by a One-Stop staff person. Similarly, some states are moving aggressively in the direction of giving employers greater freedom to contact job seekers on their own. For example, the Minnesota Department of Economic Security is moving in this direction, with a goal of having 80% of large and medium-sized employers processing resumes by

Centers are promoting the idea of allowing job seekers to contact employers directly in response to a job posting, or vice versa.

computer. The state of Indiana also recently implemented the CS 3 system; when in place, it will allow employers to match their job orders electronically with applicants who have registered with the One-Stop Center and placed their resumes on their system.

On-site recruitment strategies. In addition to these electronic methods, sites use other strategies to help employers "help themselves" to actively recruit job applicants. These included on-site recruitment strategies, such as:

Centers allow employers to recruit on-site, by posting listings, interviewing candidates, or conducting informational sessions.

- *Self-posting and maintenance of job openings*. At the *Austin (South) Workforce Center*, employers who have on-going employment vacancies often maintain their own job postings on a "Hot Jobs" bulletin board. At the *Bloomington WDC*, employers who have immediate or large scale employment requirements leave flyers at the Center, placed near the Intake computers where individuals filing UI claims and registering for the Job Service will see them; usually they can then contact these employers directly.
- *Using Center facilities for recruitment*. All One-Stop Centers in the study allowed employers to recruit on-site. In most cases, employers can "self-schedule." The Center then publicizes these events on a weekly or monthly calendar available to job seekers in the resource area. Variations on this popular strategy are described below.
    - The *Anoka County WDC* provides tables and chairs for employers who may "set up shop" in their lobby, to pass out information about their company and take applications. The Center publicizes employer recruitment schedules to Resource Room users and other job seekers.
    - At the *Austin WC*, employers may use recruitment space on another floor of the Center. Samsung Semiconductor used the Center as a recruitment site for all its entry level manufacturing positions when it opened an Austin plant in 1997. "Temp" agencies also use the Center facilities to conduct "informational" sessions to recruit for applicants on a regular basis.
    - At the *Bloomington WDC*, employers make presentations to interested job applicants that includes information about their company,

wages, and positions available, then take applications. Employers may also use Center space to conduct orientation sessions for new hires.

- *Offering other space for employers conducting large-scale recruitment activities.* Most One-Stop Centers have only limited space for large-scale recruitment activities; consequently, some One-Stop Centers broker or provide other space for this activity.
  - The Brevard County Training Consortium offers larger recruitment space at the Brevard Community County facilities, in place of the *Melbourne Job Link Center,* where space is limited.
- *Employer panels and workshops.* Some One-Stop Centers also invite employers to participate in various workshop-type sessions that provide them with an opportunity to "market" their companies even when they were not taking job applications. Employer respondents indicated that this also gave them an opportunity to become acquainted with the caliber of job seeker applicants available through the Center. These employer-based presentations, with attractive titles, are effective marketing tools to job seekers and employers alike.
  - At the *Austin WC* employers are encouraged to make presentations at the Center's Employer Panels sessions.
  - The *Anoka WDC* sponsors Employer of the Month sessions, which feature one employer who makes a presentation, then answers questions about the company. Their Employer of the Week series allows an employer to recruit in the lobby.
  - The *Bloomington WDC* plans on holding workshops that feature a single employer, who can discuss the firm's hiring requirements and conduct on-site interviews.

One-Stop Centers are also interested in marketing professional and technical job seekers who use their Resource Rooms. For example, one site manager indicated that attracting higher skilled job seekers and marketing these individuals to employers was an effective way to attract employers who might not otherwise utilize the Center. Similarly, two study sites make it possible for employers to "talent browse" and access salaried applicants on their own, or with minimal assistance from staff.

Centers also provide other innovative on-site recruitment services.

- *The Career Maker system.* The *Boston Work Place* developed a talent bank called the Career Maker, which includes the electronic matching of job applicants' capabilities with employers' needs.
- *The Minnesota SkillsNet system.* At the *Anoka WDC*, job seekers may have their resumes scanned and placed into the state's resume database. The system uses artificial intelligence to sort and classify resumes based on skill groupings and matched to job openings. A "matched" resume may then be sent directly to an employer or sent by the applicant. Employers may also contact individuals directly to schedule an interview.
- The *Renton Washington CDC* encourages employers who do not have Internet access to use the Center computers, where they may view on-line resumes.
- At the *Melbourne Job Link Center,* tele-video conferencing equipment is available that allows employers in another location with the same equipment to interview Center job seekers.

Innovative strategies for serving employers include electronic job matching and tele-video interviewing.

Off-site recruitment activities. One-Stop Centers also arranged off-site recruitment activities. For example, often Centers were involved in setting up Job Fairs at malls, either alone or as a sponsor in concert with other organizations. In these activities, employers are often able to self-register (in some communities, for a fee) and set up their own booths without further assistance from the sponsors. Some specific examples include:

- *Special events to bring the employer and job seeker together without direct Center intervention*. Among all the One-Stop study sites, Job Fairs afforded an effective means to bring the job seeker and employer together, without intensive use of staff. Innovative examples of Job Fairs included:
  - *Televised Job Fairs*. The *Minnesota Department of Economic Security* (MDES) sponsored a series of televised job fairs, partnering with KARE 11, a local television station. Employers could register by mailing

or faxing in an application form that was attached to the MDES employer newsletter, *The Connection*.

- *Local Job Fairs*. The *Anoka WDC* sponsors Job Fairs held at the local mall. During the last Job Fair, 140 employers and more than 20,000 job seekers attended.
- *Targeted Job Fairs*. To attract a range of job seekers in communities with low unemployment rates, One-Stop sites collaborated with local organizations and other agencies to conduct Job Fairs for targeted job seekers. For example, the *Austin WC* collaborated with "Temp" agencies on a local Job Fair. Similarly, *Bloomington WDC* collaborated with Green Thumb to set up a Job Fair for older workers, and another with the School-to-Work program to attract employers interested in youth for the Summer Jobs program or recent high school graduates for permanent positions.

Job Fairs, both for the general job seeker and targeted populations, such as youth in school-to-work programs, were also popular strategies that minimize staff assistance.

- *Outplacement assistance for downsizing firms*. The *Austin WC*, the *Melbourne Job Link Center*, the *Renton CDC* and the *Bloomington WDC* have assisted employers to set up small resource Centers for large-scale layoffs at the plant site. The affected employers provided space and equipment. Media publicity for the Bloomington effort attracted other employers to use Center services.

Information Developed Specifically for Business

All states represented in the study provide information beyond local job listings that is potentially useful to employers and that they may access on their own, in a range of formats. For example, state web sites have become an important resource to provide information to employers, and most State web sites have sections developed specifically for employers. As discussed in the previous chapter, labor market information was typically available in this way, sometimes reformatted specifically for each local SDA.

Additionally, employers with Internet capabilities can access a range of other information typically available on state web sites, including UI, Worker's Compensation, and similar regulations important to businesses. All sites also provide information about the One-Stop system and their locations across the state. Employers can also access electronic databases such as America's Talent Bank and America's Job Bank, and linkages to their local One-Stop system web site or home page if one has been established. Some notable examples of innovations in resources that can be accessed electronically are described below:

State and Center web pages provide a range of information useful to employers, including regulations relating to employment practices, advice on hiring, and labor market information.

- In Minnesota, the *MDES* web site lists recruitment resources, including Business Expos, which feature business-related events in the state; a Human Resources Management Support section, which includes the Hiring Advisor that provides information on appropriate hiring practices; and employer committees and support groups, such as the Business Ombudsman.
- The *Texas Workforce Commission* (TWC) web site provides a range of business-based information on LMI, state services specific to employers, and databases of job seekers through Job Express. The LMI division and the SOICC provide information on industry and occupational trends, UI rates, and wages and benefits rates. Additional information can be requested through the LMI division's e-mail address. The TWC also provides information at their state and local web sites that describe their Centers in great detail
- The *Indiana Department of Workforce Development* (DWD) has moved all its labor market information to its home page. DWD has also developed a section called "About the Search" to make linkages to other sites easier. Sections of particular interest to employers include an "Employer Desk Guide" that lists information and services available to employers, a calendar of events, UI rates, detailed information on UI regulations, and laws governing notification of a plant closure. Bloomington's SDA also has a home page that provides detailed information about One-Stop locations and services.
- The *Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development* (DWD) web site lists information for employers that includes: the Business Resource Network designed to help businesses find useful information on the web; a list of Wisconsin Job (One-Stop) Centers; and Wages & Hour information and laws.

Example of Innovative Software Providing Useful Guidance

The *Workforce Center of Anoka County* makes available to employers the Hiring Advisor, a software program the includes information on ADA and EEO compliance, and strategies for conducting job analysis, recruiting, building an applicant pool, and conducting background checks. This package can be printed or downloaded from their Internet web site.

Study states and sites also attempted to keep employers informed about the emerging One-Stop system through publications and brochures, as well as providing information through kiosks. Some examples include:

- "The Connection" is a quarterly news bulletin published by the *Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES),* sent out to employers. It includes information on how employers can access on-line services and place job orders on the Internet. *Anoka WDC* brochures describe how information can be self-accessed, special incentives for employers, and sample applications that can be faxed or mailed to the Center to request information or submit a job order. The Resource Center also offers employers a "model application" that includes a section on reasons for asking for specific kinds of information.
- *TWC's* LMI division mails out a monthly publication called the "Labor Market Review", also available at One-Stop Centers.
- The *Morrisville, Vermont* One-Stop Center provides brochures on self-services for employers. The site also has a kiosk in the local mall whose Services for Employers section describes information available at the local One-Stop Center, such as AJB, Training Brokerage, human resource consulting, and recruitment assistance.
- At the *Racine WDC*, a regional LMI analyst is available to serve employers, such as adapting information specific to employer needs. Employers may also print out an employer services menu at the Center's lobby kiosks.

Some Centers produce brochures specifically geared towards employers. One developed a Resource Room with employer customers specifically in mind.

HOW EMPLOYER SERVICES ARE DELIVERED

Several One-Stop Centers in our study have attempted to move away from the traditional labor exchange model of using ES specialists to contact employers to request job orders. Instead, these Centers are marketing themselves as a place where employers can access a range of services, some provided in a self-service mode, while other services are still available through "account executives." For example, skills matching assistance is still a service employers say they want in this period of low unemployment. However, our study sites wanted to help employers become conscious of the fact that One-Stop Centers are very different from the previous system and that this change is to their advantage.

An Innovative Strategy for Delivering Employer Services

The *Bloomington WDC* is particularly interested in developing stronger relationships with the employer community and has attempted to devise a number of strategies to support this initiative. For example, an Employer Information Resource Area (EIRA) has been developed specifically for employers. Located adjacent to the Resource Room for job seekers, the EIRA includes materials developed by the local WDC as well as by the state Department of Workforce Development. LMI and other information tailored specifically for employers is available there, such as videotapes and various publications, including "1001 Ways to Reward Employees," "Stopping Sexual Harassment," and two ADA videos, among others. Employers can request copies of these resources with a "fax back" order form. The WDC is also featuring local employers on videotape in a "Profiles" series, which provides information on job titles and duties, working conditions, and other information about the specific employer. This information is useful in helping employers market themselves to potential job seekers.

New models of service delivery also included partnering with business-led entities. Several sites are partnering or collaborating with local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Departments, in order to expand their outreach, but also to broaden the range of services to the business community. Along with this, One-Stop Centers are working hard to change their image. Some Center managers commented that employers are more likely to use all services—self and facilitated—if they are comfortable with staff attitudes and responses. For example:

New models of service delivery include partnering with business-led groups, to help design and promote employer services.

- In *Bloomington*, the Chamber of Commerce sponsors a Workforce Development Initiatives group, designed to promote employer services available through the

Center.

- In *Racine*, the Center's Employer Services team consists of employees of business organizations who work under contract to the Center.

Example of Involving Employer Groups in Marketing

At the *Racine WDC*, employer services are provided by an Employer Services Team staffed by personnel from business-led organizations who work under contract to the Center. They call on employers in the community to inform them about Center services. Their primary effort is not to solicit job orders, but the Center management indicates that job orders have increased since the Employer Services Team was established.

CONCLUSIONS

Each of the One-Stop sites in the study indicated that employers in their community were not particularly interested in self-directed services. Rather, employers expressed a need for more intensive services, particularly having an "account executive" located at the One-Stop Center whom they could contact with a job order, and who would take a personal interest in their workforce needs. This was especially important, employers said, in this "job seekers' market." One respondent indicated that she maintained close contact with "one particular staff person," because she "wanted to keep her needs in front of staff, keep the door open." Another employer compared it to going to the same barber each week, because "he knows what you want and you don't need to keep reminding him."

Many employers lack the easy ability to access the Internet and thus cannot access information electronically.

As described in other sections, job orders in each of the One-Stop sites are already being disseminated across the state, and in most states, across the country, potentially giving employers access to a huge databank of job seekers from which to select. However, while job seekers seem to be comfortable using the self-service systems in Resource Rooms to conduct their job search, only about half of the employer respondents indicated that they had Internet capabilities and only a few of those said that they used their computers to search for job applicants.

However, in those sites where employers had an opportunity to learn more about the One-Stop system by way of participating in

Many employers don't see how self-services can benefit them. They need more information about *potential advantages.*

Center-related activities—a Job Fair, recruiting for applicants at the Center, or making a presentation at a job seeker workshop—they indicated that they had a better perception of the One-Stop concept and how it was preferable to services provided under the previous system. They were also enthusiastic about being able to use the services that the Center offered, without intensive assistance from staff. On the other hand, employers who had only marginal interaction with their local Center were confused about the services of the One-Stop Center; e.g., how it was different from the "Employment Service," and the role of the on-site partners. Clearly, employers need more information about all the services available in their local One-Stop Centers in order to make better use of them. Moreover, a case needs to be made as to how their use of self-directed services can enhance their workforce needs. Employers' examples of how they could be kept informed included receiving a quarterly newsletter or brochure describing services at the Center or available on the Internet. They also expressed an interest in services they could direct at terminated employees, such as brochures that they could give to employees about to be laid off.

A balance must be struck between providing employers the personalize attention they need, while encouraging them to access information and resources on their own.

As One-Stop Centers are being asked to do more with less staff, and self-services for job seekers are expanding, One-Stop Centers are looking for ways to satisfy their employer requirements for employment-related services in a cost and staff-effective manner. One strategy some Centers are adopting to accomplish this is to move to fee-based services for activities that are more staff-intensive. Staff-intensive fee-based services were offered at the *Boston Work Place*, *Racine WDC,* and the *Austin Workforce Center-South*. Some of these services consisted of customized employee assessments, job profiling and task analysis, large scale Job Fairs, outplacement services and consulting, pre-screening and recruitment assistance, and professional development and human resources services.

In any case, clearly employers, as with job seekers—at least in some states—will be asked to do more on their own, particularly in the arena of making their own job matches. If One-Stop sites can continue to innovate in other employer services-related areas, perhaps an acceptable balance can be found—one in which employers receive the help they need in the critical areas, but in which they can also move forward to use the self-directed services available to them.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The original vision of most of the One-Stop Career Centers in our sample was to develop a strong self-service infrastructure that would minimally involve staff. This vision has changed somewhat in light of implementation experiences that have demonstrated that many Center customers need at least initial staff assistance to help them use self-service resources effectively. Ideally, as these customers acquire greater familiarity with self-service options, they will need progressively less staff assistance to move toward a self-directed job search. But, even then, many can benefit greatly from periodic guidance from Center staff. For this reason, it may be less appropriate to view self-services at One-Stop Centers as a separate "tier" of services, but rather as comprising one end of a continuum of One-Stop services of varying staff intensity.

In terms of actions that Centers can take to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of self-services, the design of physical facilities constitutes an important initial step to be considered. As we described in Chapter II, the general design guidelines prepared by states and adopted by localities emphasize the ease of access to the facilities and resources for all One-Stop customers, including those with unique needs. At many of the One-Stop Centers in our sample, we also found that the layout and design of the physical space reflect the ideal of a more accessible, user-friendly, and less bureaucratic workforce development system. Centers strive to design common areas in the Resource Rooms to be aesthetically pleasing, incorporating creative physical designs including the use of large windows, ample lighting, and attractive furnishings. Envisioning the Resource Room as "like a library" is a metaphor that was commonly expressed. The design of many Centers strikes a balance between providing openness while at the same time allowing opportunities for the privacy that customers will sometimes need.

Many design elements also support the goal of providing a range of services to diverse customers as efficiently as possible. As an example of this, some Centers have experimented with layouts that allow staff to serve multiple functions. Thus, for example, the Help

Desk is often placed near the entrance to the facility, but with a clear view of the computer banks and telephones and copiers. In this way, Center staff can greet customers as they walk in, monitor the use of the array of Resource Room resources, and also see when computer users need assistance. Those study sites that have expanded in recent years have also taken the opportunity to provide more space for a broader range of partners and to enhance their resource area offerings.

With respect to facilitating customer access to self-services, as was discussed in Chapter III, one of the common themes among One-Stop Center practitioners is "helping people help themselves" by encouraging self-directed activities. Thus, many Centers emphasize the importance of providing customers with an initial orientation to the resources available and organizing materials as clearly as possible, while providing staff assistance on an as-needed basis.

Centers have adopted a variety of approaches toward achieving this goal of enhancing customers' understanding of self-services. Many sites have greeters that provide an introduction to Center resources, and one-on-one tours and general orientation workshops for new customers are quite common. Similarly, clear signage can be critically important, as are concise and clear user guides for software packages and "bookmarks" for Internet web sites of potential interest to the job seeker. Moreover, all Centers provide at least some workshops that are designed to help customers to gain a better understanding of specific self-service tools.

Centers varied considerably in the level of effort they devote to orienting customers to using self-services. For example, although some Centers provide printed guides for using self-service technologies—such as the Internet job listing resources, career planning software, or resume software, other Centers provide customers with little, if any, relevant documentation. In general, the latter find that providing staff assistance thus becomes even more necessary.

In Chapter III, we also described the ways in which Centers attempt to market their services and attract diverse customers. Examples of general marketing include television and newspaper advertisements, posting information on web sites, and sponsoring Job Fairs. Outreach efforts to special populations include conducting targeted mailings, establishing referral linkages with One-Stop partners or community-based organizations, providing Center tours for groups with special needs, and using Center space for community meetings.

Centers also adopt strategies to make self-services more accessible to groups with unique needs including individuals with disabilities, persons with limited computer skills, public assistance recipients, youth customers, and non-native English speakers. For example, young people sometimes receive customized orientations to resource areas and, in some case, have a room in the Center devoted exclusively to their needs, with computer software and other materials geared towards career planning for new job entrants. Similarly, although all Centers are ADA compliant, many have purchased an array of assistive equipment to help those with mobility, visual, or hearing impairments access self-services. In a few instances, staff members have received sensitivity training to improve their ability to provide appropriate and effective assistance to individuals with disabilities. Some Centers also seek to facilitate access to persons that are currently employed or those with young children, by offering extended hours of service or on-site childcare. Providing access to self-services through mini satellite Centers is another means to reach a broad customer base or a targeted population.

Another important issue for One-Stop Career Centers is to find ways to track Center use and to document the outcomes of self-services. As we discussed in Chapter III, there are currently a variety of mechanisms in place for tracking center use, ranging from sign-up sheets to more sophisticated electronic tracking systems, such as swipe cards. However, capturing the benefits of the self-service system in terms of employment outcomes or participation in training or education programs may prove to be much more difficult and expensive. Given the challenges associated with tracking outcomes in a self-service context, many Centers have devoted more resources toward measuring customer satisfaction with self-service tools and resources.

In Chapter IV, we described the variety of staffing arrangements across One-Stop Centers. Because staff assistance to some degree appears to be critical to the effective use of Resource Rooms, staffing arrangements are of considerable importance. We detail several approaches to staffing resource areas that were used in the last years of JTPA, including providing full-time staff for these areas, having members from different programs or agencies serve resource area customers on a rotating or "on-call" basis, or adopting a blend of these approaches. Regardless of which approach Centers adopt, the roles and responsibilities of resource area staff members are often extremely varied. Responsibilities can range from greeting customers and orientating them to Center resources, providing customers with individualized assistance, developing curricula and facilitating workshops on self-services, and organizing and updating resource area materials.

Because the demands on staff are so varied, building staff capacity for resource area staff is a major concern for One-Stop Career Centers. Within the multidisciplinary team framework promoted at many One-Stop Career Centers, staff need to develop the skills required of the emerging culture of customer service. Also, because technologies are constantly changing, it is crucial that staff possess both the necessary computer skills and broad knowledge of the variety of electronic and other self-service resources. Furthermore, staff must be acquainted with the needs of an extremely diverse customer base. In many cases, however, opportunities and resources for capacity building are quite limited. Further exacerbating challenges to capacity-building efforts are the high levels of staff turnover encountered at some Centers.

Chapter V details the types of self-service information and resources typically available at One-Stop Centers. The topic-specific areas that we covered include assessment and career planning, education and training opportunities, labor market information, job search listings and resources, and resume preparation software.

We found that job seekers at One-Stop Centers are primarily interested in finding immediate employment, and as a result they often prefer those services that they view as most directly related to their job search. For this reason, job listings and resume-writing packages are very popular at most Centers. Some Centers, however, have also achieved relative success in promoting the use of career assessment and exploration tools, materials on education and training providers, and information pertaining to local labor markets.

For each of these topic areas, we discussed the relative strengths and weaknesses of the available resources. A few of these comments are detailed below:

- *Career planning and assessment tools* are becoming increasingly sophisticated, often allowing customers to link their assessment results to information on jobs and providers of education and training. These tools, however, have some drawbacks. For example, tools that are simple and quick to use are more appealing to customers in a self-services context, but may not yield very detailed assessment results; tools yielding more reliable and detailed results, by contrast, are often intimidating and complex. Additionally, customers may not understand the differing assessment results that can occur depending on the assessment tools' emphasis on interests, abilities, or aptitudes, or the relative importance of these various factors to career planning. Thus, some level of professional assistance may continue to be necessary to assist customers with the career planning and exploration process.

- *Information on education and training providers* . Several career planning and assessment software programs link to databases containing comprehensive information on post-secondary and training institutions, and some programs also allow users to sort by region, area of study, tuition rates, or other relevant factors. However, only two sites provide access to state consumer report systems on vocational-technical and college programs. Moreover, in several sites, printed materials concerning education and training opportunities were either out-of-date, poorly organized, or both. Thus, these are areas for further improvement.

- Providing up-to-date and locally relevant *labor market information* continues to be a major challenge for many Centers. Moreover, customers are often overwhelmed by vast amounts of LMI that they do not know how to apply in making career decisions. Among the effective strategies that increased the usefulness of LMI include the integration of LMI into workshops for customers and the systematic development of staff competence in using and interpreting LMI.

- Customer access to *job listings* remains an extremely popular feature of One-Stop Career Centers. Several Centers further facilitate the job search process by providing Internet bookmarks or links to relevant job-listing sources or by providing customers with printed guides to popular job search sites. The rapid development of electronic media for matching applicants with jobs through America's Job Bank and searching through the hundreds of other electronic sites providing job listings have profoundly altered the job search process for many Americans. However, often because of employer preferences, job matching continues to remain a major function for Employment Service and other staff at One-Stop Career Centers.

- *Resume writing programs* are another very popular offering at One-Stop Career Centers and are particularly useful for customers with computer skills and recent job-search experience. Yet because these programs assume at least a modicum of computer competence, staff at many Centers continue to help less experienced customers create resumes.

In Chapter VI, we discussed services for employer customers and found reluctance on the part of many employers to embrace the range of new self-service options available to them. Many employers we interviewed expressed a preference for maintaining a personal contact with a job developer or employer services staff member of the Center, even if they also utilize self-services. Several One-Stop Career Centers have developed strategies designed to promote more active employer use of One-Stop resources. These strategies include providing specifically designated resource areas for employers, allowing on-site recruitment, and sponsoring employer workshops, panels, and "meet the employer" sessions. Another promising practice is to have staff visit employers, taking a laptop computer along with them, so that they can demonstrate how to post job listings and access the Center's on-line services.

Overall, it is clear that the Centers in our study have made great strides in expanding access and customer choice for self-services within the One-Stop Career Center system. They are thus well along toward the goal of providing universal access to a wide range of tools and resources for a diverse range of customers. Based on their experiences, important lessons were learned and challenges were identified. Beyond the issues that arose with respect to the effective use of specific resources and tools, which we summarized earlier in this chapter, the most significant challenges that emerged from this study are discussed below.

- *Resource Rooms can and should be designed deliberately, to facilitate access to self-services.* Centers in this study were often extremely thoughtful and deliberate in designing the Resource Room and other self-service areas to foster an inviting atmosphere and promote a smooth and efficient customer flow. Similarly, Centers discovered that quiet areas are required for certain functions, such as making telephone calls, and that the design should promote a feeling of "openness," while balancing the customers' need for some privacy.
- *Centers must develop marketing and outreach mechanisms to attract a diverse range of customers.* While most One-Stop

Career Centers have a vision of the Center as an important "community resource," many Centers serve a predominantly ES/JTPA customer base. In order to attract a more diverse range of customers into the Resource Room, Centers must develop more aggressive marketing and outreach mechanisms as well as linkages with a broad range of employers.

- *State and local One-Stop systems need to accommodate potential Center users with limited computer skills*, who are often intimidated and unable to use many Resource Room tools and services on their own. Promising strategies to promote access among individuals with limited computer skills include offering computer tutorials or workshops on basic computer skills on site.
- *New customers will need an orientation to Center services.* The orientation should take the form of a combination of brochures, kiosks or videos (e.g., available in waiting areas), web sites offering an introduction to Center services or virtual tours, and orientation workshops and walk-throughs.
- *Clear signage and easy-to-understand written instructions are imperative in helping customers to get oriented to Resource Room materials and resources and facilitating their use.* Thus, signage should clearly identify which computers are loaded with what software. Clear guidance also needs to be provided about what software should be used for what purposes and how they each should be used (e.g., how to access the software, how to navigate, etc.). Several of the Centers we studied provided excellent examples of how this could be done effectively.
- *Staff play a critical set of roles in a self-service context,* including designing and facilitating workshops, organizing the various tools and resources, and providing individualized assistance. Even with clear signage and written instructions, many users will need assistance from staff, at least periodically, and they greatly value the face-to-face interaction. For those persons with little work or job-search experience or for those lacking technical skills, staff assistance is especially critical. Moreover, because the job search or career change process can be stressful even for persons with advanced skills, the "human touch" is often appreciated.
- *One-Stop systems must continually promote staff capacity building.* Having an experienced and well-trained cadre of staff is extremely important to the development of self-services in One-Stop Career Centers, particularly given that the number and diversity of universal customers accessing

resources in many of the study sites continue to increase. Investment in capacity building, however, in terms of developing both the technical and interpersonal skills required of resource staff, is often difficult because of financial or time constraints. Similarly, staff turnover is often high at some Centers, making it difficult to build a sustainable and continuous program of capacity development.

- *One-Stop systems have encountered challenges in designing effective strategies to promote remote access to self-services.* Several One-Stop systems have sought to improve access to self-services by establishing remote access points. Although kiosks represent one strategy to provide remote access, they are typically limited in functionality and often viewed as more of a marketing tool. Centers in this study achieved greater success in encouraging remote access to services by creating satellite Centers accessible to target populations (e.g., at locations such as secondary schools or public housing developments).
- *Documenting the performance of the self-service system poses numerous challenges for One-Stop systems.* In an era in which every area of public service is under legislative mandate to demonstrate results, documenting the performance of a self-service system will continue to represent one of the greatest challenges facing the emerging One-Stop Career Center system. Although all of the Centers examined in this study have at least some system in place to track customer usage (e.g., numbers of persons using the Center on a daily basis), and a few have methods for tracking more detailed information (e.g., the types of services accessed), it will be extremely difficult for One-Stop Career Centers to establish mechanisms that capture the outcomes that result from using self-services, such as obtaining employment or enrolling in a training program. Therefore, efforts to measure customer satisfaction with services and resources may provide the most helpful information to improve the quality and effectiveness of the self-service system.
- *Increasing employer awareness and use of self-services presents another challenge for One-Stop systems .* Although many large employers have developed Internet web-sites and have relatively sophisticated recruitment strategies, many of the employers currently served by the One-Stop Centers in our sample remain relatively dependent on staff assistance for many phases of the job-matching process. Therefore, One-Stop Career Centers should continue developing strategies and implementing practices designed to acquaint the small- and medium-sized employers they serve with the

variety of emerging self-service technologies. Moreover, efforts to attract employer customers to the Center, such as "meet the employer" sessions, can play an important role in facilitating the labor exchange process.

APPENDIX A
Project Profiles

THE MELBOURNE JOB LINK CENTER
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Brevard is Florida's longest county, stretching seventy-two miles along the Atlantic coast. The One-Stop centers have been strategically located adjacent to the county's major population and economic hubs; in addition to the full-service sites, there are three "Community Commons" mini-centers located in or near low-income housing areas, in part to compensate for the county's inadequate public transportation system. The Melbourne Job Link Center, one of the nine One-Stops in Brevard County, is viewed as a model for the state and the county.

The Brevard Employment and Training Consortium (BETC), under contract with the Brevard Workforce Development Board (BWDB), operates the Brevard County Job Link One Stop Career Center System. It consists of Brevard Community College, Florida Jobs and Benefits (ES and UI), Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Brevard County Schools. BETC also has close partnerships and ties with the range of social service and education institutions across the county.

FACILITIES

The Melbourne Center is located in a strip mall with ample parking space, near a major highway. The Center is designed for convenient access to the public areas—the Resource Room being the most accessible—with conference facilities and classrooms (with moveable walls) located adjacent to the resource area. Staff offices are located on both sides of the center. Staff who have client caseloads have their offices located further towards the back, where there is also a play area for children. The center colors are muted and attractive, with motivational posters lining the walls.

Much of the resource area is visible as one enters through the glass double doors; the reception area, called the Help Desk, is located in the middle of the Resource Room. Wood shelves contain hard copy resources (books, magazines and catalogues) and attractive signs describe the subjects for each section. Round tables and chairs near the front windows are covered with local and area newspapers. The Center is designed with "clerical" equipment centralized in one area behind the Help Desk. Free to all customers, these include a fax and copier, three booths with telephones for contacting employers (local and long distance calls are permitted), and video monitors for viewing tapes on job search and related subjects.

FACILITATING CUSTOMER ACCESS AND DOCUMENTING USAGE

Originally designed primarily for customers who were technologically literate, the objective of Florida's One-Stops Centers are now to serve the job-seeking needs of the universal customer. The Melbourne Center attempts to provide access to all customers equally, through a range of orientations, each designed to conform to the job seekers' needs. The orientations consist of: (1) a short tour of the Resource Area, and an orientation for the walk-in universal customer; (2) tours for potential JTPA eligibles (combined with a general orientation to Center and JTPA services); and (3) tours for special groups, e.g., secondary instructors, counselors and students, and youth from high-risk environments in special training programs. Tours for instructors, students, and out-of-school youth are generally arranged and co-led by Center staff and the tours' sponsors.

Customer characteristics. About 100 customers use the self-services each day; about 45 are enrolled in a Job Club, and about 10 - 15 job seekers participate in the mini-workshops. Customers observed in the center were predominantly older and had been attached to the work force for many years, were salaried, and had been laid off from their previous job. The Center estimates that about 75% of the self-service users are dislocated workers. Center customers tend to use the computers and the Internet and newspapers for their job search.

Orientation to self-services. Individuals entering the Center for the first time sign in at the Help Desk and are given a tour of the Resource Room by a staff person. Individuals who may need additional assistance with computers and accessing software programs are also assisted by staff. An attractive binder located at each computer workstation—the Workforce Organizer—provides step-by-step directions on how to access all software programs and Internet sites. As Help Desk staff interact with newcomers, they are instructed to ask questions designed to informally assess the visitor's potential eligibility for more intensive services. Those so identified are encouraged to attend the Wednesday afternoon orientation describing JTPA services.

Workshops. The Center's Workforce Development Lab provides weekly "modular" workshops of three hours each, covering subjects related to career exploration, cover letters and resumes, managing stress during the job search, and starting and keeping the new job. While clients from funded programs have priority, universal customers are usually able to participate, since the workshops are given frequently.

The Job Search Workshop, held one half-day each week, focuses on networking and reviewing the various methods and tools in the resource area that support the job search. The workshop is chaired by the center's job developer who assists all participants "in any way possible" with the job search. This workshop is very popular and normally draws about 40 participants each week.

The Wednesday afternoon JTPA Orientation workshop is open to individuals who have been identified as potentially eligible for JTPA services. A JTPA counselor, who leads the workshop, discusses the various services available through JTPA and takes applications. She also provides an orientation to center self-directed services, since not all applicants will be approved for JTPA services.

Special populations. Brevard County has made good progress in its School-to-Work and Welfare-to-Work programs, reaching out to these entities so their constituents may also make use of self-services. By category, services to special populations include:

- *School-to-Work.* STW sites at 16 secondary schools provide services to students where they can access education, career, and employment opportunities, via access to the Internet, the Workforce Organizer, and the Brevard County home page. Teachers involved in STW are trained by Brevard Workforce Development Board staff to use the Job Link system to ensure that students and parents may receive career exploration and job seeking services at school sites.
- *Welfare-to-Work.* BETC, under contract with the Brevard Workforce Development Board (BWDB), operates the WAGES program and assigns staff to the Melbourne Center, and WAGES clients are required to use the Resource Area as a part of their job-seeking training.
- *Persons with Disabilities.* The Melbourne Job Link center meets all ADA requirements. The computer area's large-screen monitors are designed to serve the visually impaired, and the Center is investigating other ways to better serve those with disabilities. Currently, staff rely on referral to other agencies, such as the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- *The Brevard County School District.* The District provides on-site ABE and GED classes. An on-site fully equipped computer lab provides computer training for funded program eligibles.

Documenting System Performance. All Resource Room users must sign in at the Help Desk, and the Brevard County Web site "hits" are monitored. Beyond this, the Center has several methods to collect information about customer satisfaction. Among these, suggestion forms are available at the Help Desk, workshop users fill in an evaluation at the conclusion of each session, and computer users who visit the Brevard County site may provide comments via e-mail. Information gathered from the various systems are provided to the Workforce Development Board members, who review and suggest modifications. Information gathered for the three summer months indicated that about 6,000 customers visited the center, 150 took GED classes, and 159 attended JTPA informational sessions.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Generally, there are three staff persons available at the Help Desk, as well as others who assist customers in the Resource Room. At the Help Desk are a UI specialist, who screens claims filers and registers job seekers; a work experience trainee, who assists customers with clerical tasks; and a third position, filled by rotating ES or JTPA staff. The JTPA case manager, who conducts the weekly JTPA orientations, is the Help Desk supervisor. Also of assistance to Resource Room customers are the Center's computer technology specialists, who may assist customers using the computers, and the Resource Specialist, who is often available to assist customers with selecting appropriate resource materials. The Center job developer is also very active and visible in the Resource Room, as he attempts to assist all job seekers in "whatever way possible" to access appropriate job referrals.

Staff Training. When the Workforce Development Board was first established, staff received some technical and computer training, provided by the Brevard County Community College (BCC), including how to use the state's LMI and Choices software, Microsoft Office, and the state's Job Information System (JIS). Staff are also encouraged to take free classes offered through BCC. The state One-Stop Coordinator stated that some capacity building had been done on such subjects as TQM, and that additional training related to One-Stop implementation is being planned. The state's Learning Lab grant has also been used to develop a training program for all staff. An "Ambassador Train the Trainer" curriculum is being developed to train all One-Stop staff in Brevard County. A Tele-Video conferencing system—also purchased with Learning Lab grant funds—is also used to provide training to staff in each of the sites across the county.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Information and resources are provided in a number of modes so that all customers, regardless of their literacy levels or computer capabilities, can be accommodated. This includes books, newspapers and technical journals, videotapes, Sunday newspaper want ads on microfiche, workshops, and binders of printed information, in addition to the JIS, the Internet and other computer programs.

Labor market information. Much of the labor market information, developed by the state's LMI division, *is* provided on the state's web pages on the Internet, and in hard copy. Consisting of the standard information provided by most state LMI divisions across the country, it includes state and county data on employers, leading and lagging industries and occupations, average wages for specific occupations, and five-year projections on occupations and wages by industry. Brevard County information includes an employer survey based on the 1997 census that gives detailed information on occupations, salaries, demand jobs, and employment trends. Other Internet sites feature Florida's LMI NET, CIDS and OIS. *Choices* also provides specific information on targeted high-demand, high-wage occupations in Florida. One of the Workforce Development Lab workshops deals with the Hidden Job Market, and includes information on how to use the Occupational Outlook handbook.

Resume writing tools. A number of videotapes and books are available on the subject of writing resumes and cover letters. The Center also provides workshops entitled "Packaging Your Skills" and "Master Your Application." Software includes Microsoft '97, WinWay and other programs that are listed in their Workforce Organizer.

Assessment and career planning services. There are two workshops and several videotapes that focus on career exploration. The center has about 50 books and periodical titles related to career trends. career information and career changes, in addition to about twenty magazines, newspapers, and technical journals that include career planning assistance. On-line, the Workforce Organizer lists a section on Career Exploration that includes America's Career InfoNet, Choices, CIDS and OIS. Universal customers may use the *Choices* program on the Internet, which provides self-assessment tools linked to specific information about post-secondary education in Brevard County, the state, and the country. Staff-assisted assessments using the APTICOM system are available for program participants only

Job search services/Job listings. The Center provides job listings in a number of formats, designed to make these accessible to all job seekers. Options include: (1) information on a range of job listing sites on the Internet; (2) microfiche that contains the Sunday want ads sections from 65 newspapers; (3) the popular Job Club workshop, combined with active assistance from the Center job developer; (4) a number of local and area newspapers; (5) binders of current job listings that consist of updates to provide information on the latest job listings; (6) the state's job matching JIS system that contains state and local job orders with bookmarks to America's Job Bank and other sites; and (7) a telephone hot-line that provides listings of local employer job opportunities.

Information about education and training providers. Brevard Community College catalogues are available in the Center, but most of the information about other area, state, and national post-secondary institutions must be accessed on the Internet. *Choices* has information on career exploration with linkages to skills needed and training providers. Other information includes: (1) financial aid information and assistance for Brevard Community College, via a link to their mainframe computer; (2) JTPA program eligibility, intake and enrollment assistance for all JTPA titles, which includes assessment and counseling; (3) ABE and GED training at all One-Stop sites; and (4) information and referral to STW and work-based internship apprenticeship programs.

Tutorials for Skills Improvement. The Workforce Organizer lists a number of computer-based tutorials designed to "improve skills that are needed to obtain employment." These consist of: *Skills Bank,* to improve reading, writing and math skills; a *Typing Tutor;* and a *Windows and Office 95 Tutorial.* Tutorials on videotapes include "WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS" and "Getting acquainted with your computer."

SELF SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

As is the case with other sites, employer self-services are limited. Self-services include the capability to fax in job orders using the center's job- order forms, recruitment for new hires at the Center, and placing job orders on the Internet. Job orders are suppressed, so UI or ES specialists make the referrals. Employers sometimes also may recruit at the Center.

During the employer on-site focus group, respondents indicated that they prefer working in person with the job developer or other placement staff. Only half said that they used the Internet. Employers indicated an interest in receiving more information about the new One-Stop system and brochures they could use to give to terminating employees.

INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Innovative practices in self-service design implemented by the Brevard Job Link Center include:

- *Effective strategies to help customers use self-services.* Menus and descriptions of how to use each of the services at each service area and work station are user friendly and take the customer, step-by-step, through the process of how to use that service. The Workforce Organizer binder located at each computer workstation is a user-friendly guide to all on-line sites, including how to use the Job Link Center among others.
- *Partner services accessibility.* On-site partnerships allow job seekers to easily move from self-to mediated or intensive services.
- *Intensive participation of educational institutions.* The Brevard Community College and the County Public Schools bring a range of capabilities that enhance self-service, including providing ABE and GED training, PC training, and career exploration services for high school students *and* their parents.
- *Self-services for low-income customers.* The Community Commons mini-sites allows access to individuals who cannot travel to larger Job Link centers; mini-centers demonstrate the dedication of the County Job Link system to serve everyone in the community.

Challenges mentioned by leadership, still to be overcome, include:

- *Staffing the Help Desk.* Due to the high volume of individuals that use the Resource Room, it is sometimes difficult to provide adequate staffing.
- *Promoting Job Link Services.* Several employers and individual respondents voiced some confusion during the site visit about how the Job Link Centers differ from the prior system. Others indicated that it was a "best kept secret." Recently, the Workforce Development Board hired a marketing coordinator. Hopefully, this will help to publicize the range of Job Link system services available to all customers.
- *Transitioning to a Job Link Culture.* While all partners assigned to a Job Link Center report to the Center Director, ensuring that they adopt a "Job Link culture" within this multi-partner setting is still a challenge. The planned Ambassador training program should help to instill the concept of staff as ambassadors of customer service, rather than employees of a specific agency.

INDIANA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER
BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

The Bloomington Workforce Development Center, considered by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development to be a "model" office, opened in February 1997, and an open house was held in May 1997. The lead agencies for the One- Stop system within the Indiana Department of Workforce Development are the ES, Veterans Services, UI, and JTPA. The Bloomington WDC is co-managed by a state merit employee, the on-site Program Manager, and a JTPA Program Manager.

Indiana originally announced its intent to implement policies for agency collocation and integration via a "One-Stop shopping" approach in 1985, placing Indiana in the forefront in developing the One-Stop concept. The state's vision for their One-Stop system was " to be the first choice for information about employment and the labor market, responsive to customer needs, and a single system of service that was easy to enter, exit, and reenter." The state emphasized that providing information to the universal customer in a self-service setting was integral to the concept of the One-Stop model: that "you could not do one without the other."

FACILITIES

The center director, soliciting ideas from local focus groups, designed the self-service area to "be like a library," easily accessible, with few or no restrictions for its use, and with "no red tape" to access information—to "empower people to direct their own job search, so that you don't have to see a person to gain access." The Bloomington WDC's Information Resource Area (IRA) is clearly visible from the double glass door entrance area, located close to the Reception Desk, and is open during regular business hours.

Thirteen computers are located in the main part of the IRA, surrounded by wood book shelves that contain catalogues, books, brochures, reference books, and binders of information, separated by subject area. The most visible are the ALEX computers, to connect to Indiana's job match system. Back against the wall are two video monitors and several round tables with chairs for those who are using the hard copy resources. Near the front entrance is a rack with flyers announcing center services and brochures describing community services, placed so customers may immediately access information about the range of available services and resources. Photocopy and fax services are available free, but monitored by staff, and one of the classrooms has been converted to a Job Club, with telephones for job seekers to contact employers.

FACILITATING CUSTOMER ACCESS AND DOCUMENTING USAGE

Customer characteristics. The IRA attracts a range of individuals, including blue-collar workers as well as professionals. A demographic snapshot indicates that half the center users are employed, most are white and below age 30; over half are high school graduates, about 30% are veterans and 10% are disabled. The Program

Director rated the use of the IRA as follows: (1) conducting a job search; (2) developing a resume using the various resume building software programs; (3) career exploration; and (4) improving basic skills using the workbooks and the tutorials on the PCs.

Orientation to IRA services. The Reception Desk provides general information about all services and provides customers with brochures and flyers describing center services and other community resources. An IRA counselor or Reception Desk staff member may conduct a short one-on-one tour of the IRA.

Workshops. Universal customers may attend any of the six-hour "Prepare Yourself" workshops offered. Conducted by an ES specialist, workshops subjects include the hidden job market, resume writing, and interviewing techniques. A Job Club is also held one day a week as a networking tool. A "Services Description" workshop, which describes all the services available at the Center, is held once a month.

Special populations. All areas of the center are wheelchair accessible, and the building is ADA approved. The Center has made a representative amount of information available in Braille; e.g., on interviewing skills, job search techniques, and labor market information. They also have three individual workshops in Braille focused on job search techniques. There is TDDY access and Zoom text on four of the PCs, Braille/large letter key labels, and videos that are close-captioned. The Center also can make interpreter services available, for sight and hearing impaired. The Center has some staff trained to sign, and some are bi-lingual in Spanish. The job coach of a local shelter for the developmentally disabled brings in a group of job-ready participants from a local shelter and helps them to use the IRA to access job listings and then works with employers that hire his participants. Vocational Rehabilitation offices are in a different facility, but staff from this office are available to come on site if needed.

As a way of reaching out to special populations, this Center has also established some remote access points. Among these, a touch screen kiosk has been established at the Bloomington County public library. Although limited with respect to the types of information one can access through this source, it does allow one to access information about the IRA and to download information about specific job openings. A Perkins-funded grant has also been used to establish a mini-resource area in an education complex that includes the area high school, a community college, and an adult education center; the site will eventually have extended evening and Saturday hours. Finally, a mini-center was established, in cooperation with the employer and union, at a large plant facility experiencing sizable downsizing.

Documenting system performance. Currently, the Center does not require IRA users to sign in, but the Center may install an "electric eye" to better tally use of the area. Demographic data on customers is collected on the Common Intake System, when individuals file a UI claim or register for the JS. The Project Director estimates that use of the IRA is steadily increasing; currently, about 600 customers use the IRA each month. As additional strategies to track system performance, each quarter the state conducts a customer satisfaction survey of employers and job seekers who use One-Stop services; two of the five survey items relate directly to the use of self-directed services, including the use of technology and on-line options. To assist them with their customer satisfaction goals, the Bloomington WDC has also set up an employer focus group, which meets regularly.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The IRA staff include *two IRA counselors*, who assist universal customers in using the computers and provide career planning and counseling services. Each Tuesday they administer, to anyone who is interested, various assessment tests, including the CAPS, COPS, COPES, and the TABE, as well as typing tests and assessments requested by employers. These counselors are also responsible for assisting individuals to use the career planning, resume writing and other computer-based services. They also conduct the various tours—individual orientation tours for universal customers, as well as group tours for external groups. One of the counselors is responsible for providing the day-long Summer Youth orientation and tour. A third IRA staff person is the *Technology Specialist*, also a counselor, who is primarily responsible for inputting the daily state job orders, and installing and maintaining the computer software and hardware. Two half-time *Green Thumb* assistants are responsible primarily for assisting individuals to register on the Common Intake System. *Customer Service Specialists* at the Reception Desk answer questions and provide directions on the registration procedures. They may also give first-time IRA users a brief tour of the area.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Within the state's broad mandated guidelines, local WDCs have substantial autonomy—"pushing local solutions for local needs"—to develop information and resources appropriate for the community. A state Internet Home Page was introduced in July 1997, and the SDA maintains its own Home Page as well.

Labor market information. Staff believe that much LMI data are used primarily by academic institutions, business, and economic development entities. However, to make it as useful to customers as possible, the SDA "reconstructs" the normal LMI information (e.g., occupational wage information, and trends) for local use. A local area university, Vincennes, also assists by developing a newsletter on labor market-related subjects. Additional LMI available in the IRA includes access to the state's employer database that contains company names, addresses, and contacts, by region, which is updated twice a year. Various videos are available, including "Career Exploration: A job seekers guide to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, Guide for Occupational Exploration and the DOT." Hard-copy resource materials and publications include Indiana Manufacturers Directory, business journals, the Occupational Outlook series, and the "300 Fastest Growing Jobs."

Resume and interviewing tools. Using the IRA to develop their resumes is a primary objective for most customers. Resources for the development of resumes include workshops, books and other publications, and software. With respect to the latter, resume templates for Word Perfect and Word are available, as are the Windows version of Resume and Job Search Pro. Videotapes are available, including Writing Resumes and Cover Letters, and Resume Remedy.

Assessment and career planning. The Center provides several types of self-assessment and career exploration tools, some of which are then linked to specific training and education institutions. Examples include *Choices*, a career assessment package recommended by the IRA counselors because it is user-friendly, and *Career Finder*, which provides some quick and easy occupational guidance on career interests. Additional IRA resources include *ICPAC,* developed by Indiana State University, which allows individuals to conduct a self-inventory to determine career interests, then links with career options connected to specific occupations and schools. In addition, quite a number of videos are available, including the "Careers in..." series, which describe specific occupations; and "Transitions: Choices for Mid Career Changers." As mentioned above, counselors also provide assessments to anyone at the center, using the CAPS, COPS and COPES, and the TABE. Interpreted by the counselors, assessment results from these instruments help individuals make decisions about appropriate careers based upon their basic skills and occupational interests and aptitudes.

Job search services/Job listings. The ALEX system is the most popular method used for job search at the IRA. Other on-line job listings include the typical sources; e.g., the Monster Board, America's Employers, etc. Staff in the IRA also encourage job seekers to look in the classified ads, sign up for the workshops on the hidden job market, and participate in the Job Club. The center has some job listings in hard copy, such as the City of Bloomington and University and state position openings. Sometimes, immediate job openings are mounted on bulletin boards or flyers are placed around the Center and near the Common Intake System PCs.

Information on education and training providers. The IRA includes catalogues, brochures and information packets on all major institutions in Indiana, a Student Aid Survival Kit, and information on how to apply for student financial aid. Additionally, counselors have bookmarked information on local vocational and adult schools. Entrance tests for certain trades apprenticeship programs are also administered by the WDC.

Tutorials for improving skills. About 50 workbooks and computer software provide self-study on a range of topics, including algebra, math, problem solving, and the like.

SELF SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

The WDC continues to develop strong linkages with the employer community, and is already collaborating with the local Chamber and Indiana University to help the business community maximize all resources available. Perhaps most innovative is the Employer Information Resource Area, a resource area with information tailored specifically for employers, including videos and other information that may be ordered by businesses, using a Fax Back system. Employers may also use the WDC to recruit employees and reserve space to conduct orientations for new hires. Employers may fax in their job orders, and visit the DWD or the SDA site on the Internet to access LMI and other employer-based information.

INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The Program Director takes a holistic view of the WDC and his vision for its leadership role in the community. Some of the innovative strategies in place, and being tried, include the following.

- *Counselors as staff for the IRA.* Having staff in the IRA who are capable of providing counseling services allows the universal customer to access professional assistance with assessment and career planning.
- *The "openness" of the IRA.* For individuals who are independent and want to search out information on their own, the Center's open environment is a plus, since they can simply walk in, wander around, and access what they need.
- *Employer self-service area (EIRA).* Providing an area specifically for employers should prove helpful in encouraging this constituency to access self-services.

THE WORK PLACE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The Boston Work Place opened in March 1996 as the first One-Stop Career Center in Boston. The Center is operated by a partnership between Jewish Vocational Services and the City of Boston's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, the regional service delivery area. The Center is governed by the Boston Regional Employment Board.

Massachusetts was the first state in the nation to embrace a competitive model for restructuring its employment and training services. Advocates of this model—including staff at the Boston Work Place—believe that competition shaped by customer demand can spark innovation, revitalize the employment and training system, and assure high quality services. Center management embraces continuous quality improvement (CQI) concepts, and all staff members participate in a range of CQI teams that conduct needs assessments and implement changes based on the information they have acquired.

The Work Place specializes in providing fee-based services and plans to further increase revenues through fees. At the same time, the Center also serves publicly funded program customers, including those with special needs. The Center's design does not include co-location of partnering agencies. Rather, all the staff salaries are paid through an integrated funding stream.

FACILITIES

The Center, which is located in a high-rise building in the heart of the financial district in downtown Boston, is easily accessible by public transportation. Furnishings are clean and comfortable, creating a professional environment similar to that of its corporate neighbors. A large resource library, which serves about fifty customers a day, is the Center's focal point. The library contains a network server, a CD tower that connects to the network in the resource library, and twenty multi-media PCs. All computers have Internet access and a variety of self-assessment tools, resume writing software, and office software.

In addition to electronic resources, there are a variety of printed materials, including an assortment of reference books, newspapers, newsletters, videos, and magazines. Job listings by areas of interest, and information concerning education and training providers, job fairs, community events, and current Center events, are posted on bulletin boards. Bookshelves contain several binders on financial aid information, local community service providers, and occupational training programs. Photocopy and fax services are available for a fee and customers use pay phones in the building lobby.

FACILITATING CUSTOMER ACCESS AND DOCUMENTING USAGE

Customer characteristics. The Center serves a variety of customers of diverse ethnicities, ages, and socio-economic backgrounds, which range, in the words of one

Center employee, from "Harvard graduates to those who are illiterate." In FY 96, more than 60% of customers had some college training, while 23% had limited English proficiency. Staff estimate that only about 20% of Center customers use self-services only—most customers receive a combination of self- and assisted services.

Orientation to Center services. New visitors are greeted warmly and professionally at the reception desk and are asked to complete a membership application that allows them access to the resource library and other services. They are given a tour of the Center and a brief video introduction to Center services. After members go through the orientation process and visit the resource library they can make an appointment with a career specialist.

Because the Center seeks to sustain and expand its services and enter the professional career counseling market, it also markets fee-based services. These include specialized assessment through the *Myers-Briggs* personality test, the *Strong Interest Inventory*, and *Career Decision-Makers*. The Center also offers career counseling sessions, individualized interviewing sessions, job search services, and a variety of workshops.

Workshops. For those customers needing guidance on various aspects of self-services, the Center offers a number of free workshops related to self-services open to the general public. These include the following: (1) a basic introduction to searching the Internet designed for the first-time user; (2) an introduction to the key features of the computer system; (3) an introduction to the key features of effective resume writing; and (4) an introduction to Microsoft *Word* and *Excel*. The Center also offers fee-based workshops dealing with aspects of self-service, including an advanced workshop on searching the Internet, the hidden labor market, and strategies for effective networking.

Special populations. The Center has invested in adaptive technologies for persons with disabilities. Six computer stations, reserved for "unique access," are equipped with "LP Win" large print software, and an enlarged monitor. Customers with hearing impairments can be hooked onto a low power FM transmitter that enhances sound. The Center also maintains a video library that contains closed-captioned videos for the hearing impaired.

In addition to making the library accessible to persons with disabilities, the Center has also made the content of its resources relevant to these customers. The library maintains a number of periodicals and bookmarked Internet links that provide information on employment and training for persons with disabilities. The Center also employs a team of knowledgeable, multilingual staff persons who are available to assist customers with limited English language proficiency.

Documenting system performance. All Center customers receive a bar-coded membership card that allows access to both free and fee-based services. These cards are used by staff to track customer usage of the various Center activities. Although this system documents the number of participants using self- and assisted services, it is not capable of documenting the *specific* services they use in the resource library. In addition to the swipe card system, the Center also uses its own internally developed data management system to document outcomes for each of five categorical programs from which it receives funding.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are three permanent staff members who work in the resource library on a rotating basis and at least one staff person is in the library at any given time. The lead resource librarian has a Masters in Library Science, and other staff members have extensive training and experience in providing career counseling, particularly to special populations. Library staff routinely administer customer satisfaction surveys, develop instructional materials on using self-service features, and upgrade tools for labor exchange, career exploration, and career development.

Staff believe that their assistance is critical to providing adequate services and that self-services are a *complementary* feature of assisted services offered at the Center. The extent to which customers rely on self-service features as part of their service package depends largely on the experiences of customers themselves. Customers with higher levels of education and work experience typically require minimal guidance in using available computer resources, but many others require at least some assistance.

Special populations. Staff provide individualized and group guidance for special populations, including welfare-to-work customers and persons with disabilities. There is a certified Rehabilitation Counselor on staff who provides individualized counseling and job search assistance to job seekers with disabilities. Typically, case management staff escort customers with special needs to the resource library and provide one-on-one tutorials on using Internet-based job banks, as well as resume writing, assessment, and career exploration. The Center also provides welfare-to-work customers with a number of workshops dealing with various aspects of self-services.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

A wide variety of self-service resources available at the Center are described in this section. Although customers may avail themselves of many self-service offerings, staff indicated that most users are primarily interested in finding immediate employment. As a result, the job listing services and resume writing packages described below are quite popular, but many fewer customers make use of the labor market information, tools for career assessment and exploration, or materials on education and training providers.

Labor market information. The Work Place maintains a well-stocked menu of periodicals and reference materials containing labor market information. Electronic links to a number of LMI sources, such as state's web page, are complemented by bookmarks to such sites as the Outlook for Specific Occupations, the Department Of Labor's ALMIS page, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Internet Labor Market Information Resources, and Jobs Smart Salary Information.

The Center has purchased CD-based products containing relevant labor market information, including *Business Base* and *American Business Information*, which provide information about specific industries, skill requirements, wage information, and projected growth of small and large companies. A fee-based workshop on using LMI resources to facilitate the job search process and career exploration is offered at the Center.

Resume and interviewing tools. The Center currently uses *WinWay* software, which provides tutorials and templates for writing resumes and cover letters. The program also provides examples of resumes according to job title as well as a vocabulary list of keywords most commonly used in resumes. In addition to its use as a resume writing tool, *WinWay* also provides tips on interviewing, including common interview questions and effective responses to those questions. Workshops on resume writing and interviewing techniques, which both make use of *WinWay* software, are open to all Center members.

Assessment and career planning. Self-directed assessment and career planning services tools are available through the Internet or through stand-alone systems purchased by the Center. One web site bookmarked at the Center is the *Career Development Manual*, a self-assessment tool developed by the University of Waterloo, which has self-assessment forms and exercises that can be printed and worked on by hand. Stand-alone products include *What Color is Your Parachute?* and *Discovery Career and Jobs Plus*. *Parachute* is an interactive program that provides self-directed career exploration and in-depth assessment in career interest and aptitudes. *Discovery Career* provides links to educational opportunities through interest and aptitude self-assessment and tips on job search and career exploration.

Job search services/Job listings. Center members can access a variety of job listings through the state's web page and through more than fifty web sites that have been bookmarked by staff. In addition to these electronic services, the Center posts a *Hot Jobs* listing of jobs with immediate hiring potential and other job listings by industry and field.

Education and training providers. Information on education and training providers is available on-line through the state's web page, in printed materials sorted by category (e.g., apprenticeships, colleges, internships, vocational schools), and through the CD-based program *Discovery Career*. To date, there are no ratings of individual training providers available at the Center.

SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

Self-services for employers are not heavily emphasized at the Center. Staff report that the large majority of employers using the Center prefer the assisted services offered by account representatives. The Center does, however, make certain self-service options available to employers.

Free services include employer access to the state web page for information on LMI and workforce development programs as well as links to Federal products, such as America's Talent Bank. Through this system, employers can also place job orders and access electronic databases of job seekers. The Center has also developed its own talent bank, called *Career Maker*, which is currently being reviewed at the state level for distribution to all career Centers.

A number of enhanced fee-based services are also available. These include worker assessment and profiles using *Work Keys*, large-scale job fairs, outplacement services, and certain types of pre-screening and recruitment assistance.

INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The Center has invested heavily in its information infrastructure to document system performance, tracking customer usage through an automated system. Resource library staff have carefully researched self-service tools and Internet sites and have made these accessible to customers. Staff use CQI principles to continually solicit customer feedback, assess the services they provide in the resource library, and promote innovative technologies to attract new customers. The Center has also been proactive in its efforts to sustain its services beyond DOL funding and has sought ways to generate revenue from fee-based services.

One major challenge facing the Center is the difficulty of orienting new users to the range of self-services available in the resource library. Customers can be overwhelmed by the Center's selection of tools and information intended to support career exploration and labor exchange. [1]

A second related challenge involves the difficulty of exposing customers to the wide variety of resources available other than job postings. Because most customers are looking for job postings, they tend to make limited use of the self-assessment and career exploration tools, or the information on labor markets and education and training opportunities. Although several workshops touch on these subjects, developing adequate instructional materials for universal customers on the wide range of self-service features available in the resource library would help to make all customers more aware of the available options.

Both employers and staff agreed that employers' strong preference was to deal with a reputable team of account representatives who would work to ensure an accurate "fit" for their needs. A third challenge for the Center, therefore, is how best to market some self-services to employers, while at the same time preserving the level of human contact that employers perceive as vital to their recruitment efforts.

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[1] Since SPR's site visit, The Work Place has developed an orientation to the Career Resource Library with accompanying printed information that describes library resources, to inform customers of the wide range of services available on a self-directed basis.

THE WORKFORCE CENTER
ANOKA COUNTY, MN

Minnesota's strategy for One-Stop development grows out of a long history of program and agency consolidation. Beginning with a reorganization of the employment and training system in 1987, through its experience as one of the first wave of One-Stop grantees, the state system has evolved toward integrated service delivery for workforce development programs. The Workforce Center of Anoka County was the first certified One-Stop in Minnesota.

The Center is an integrated, "one-stop shop" offering all program services for the general public as well as for program participants. A Workforce Council coordinates with the County Board of Commissioners to determine local service delivery. The Center is overseen by a steering committee, which is chaired by a representative of one of the core agencies that operate the Center. Several core partner agencies coordinate activities to assist individuals find employment. The Workforce Center is located in the city of Blaine, about twelve miles north of downtown Minneapolis.

FACILITIES

The Workforce Center occupies the second floor of the Human Service Center, which was constructed in 1991 to co-locate all human and workforce services in the county. A fourth floor addition in 1998 to the Workforce Center integrated the county income maintenance and childcare assistance staff to the Center. Currently, staff from 22 agencies offer a range of health and human service programs within the building, which is close to freeways and accessible through a variety of public and shared transportation services.

An open stairway and elevators lead to the Workforce Center's lobby and an information counter where customers are greeted. There is a large classroom area used for workshops, and this area is bordered by a customer lounge. A large bulletin board posts the names of "graduates," the title of their new jobs, and their starting wages. Supervised childcare is available within the building.

The Resource Center, which is located immediately to the right of the information counter, is esthetically pleasing—modern and professional, but not intimidating. The Center is clean, well arranged and logical in its "flow" and placement of equipment and furnishings. Wooden bookshelves contain reference materials and newspapers, with framed signs above each section indicating subject categories.

Located in the middle of the Center are two computer banks with dividers, with large blue signs describing their uses. The first section contains 17 computers—all with Internet access—for preparing resumes and cover letters, keyboard training, word processing, and career information. A second bank has 11 computers for accessing job listings. All computers have direct TCPIP Internet connections through the state-funded Minnesota Network, a high-speed high capacity communications backbone. Software includes *WordPerfect*, the *Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS), Choices CT and Occupations to Skills Link, Microsoft Word 97, Netscape*, the *Mavis Beacon* typing tutorial, and *Perfect Resume*.

FACILITATING CUSTOMER ACCESS AND DOCUMENTING USAGE

A range of strategies are used by staff to inform the public about the self-service options available at the Center including an initial contact by greeters, individual and group orientations, and on-site workshops. In addition, Workforce system services are promoted through the state's automated *Teleclaim* reemployment insurance (RI) phone system, as well as through informational brochures and local job fairs.

Orientation to self-services. For universal customers, orientation sessions consist of a one-on-one tour lasting about an hour. During the tour, the guide asks questions about the individual and the reason for the visit, provides the customer with brochures and informational materials on workshops, and describes the various programs offered at the Center. Customers requiring more assistance may also enroll in any of a number of workshops related to self-services.

Welfare-to-work participants receive a group orientation that includes a tour of the Center, practice using PCs, and an introduction to the Internet and computerized job services registration. As part of their program, welfare-to-work customers must spend a specified number of hours a week using the Resource Center after completing a series of workshops related to the job search.

Workshops. The Workforce Center offers a number of workshops that range in duration from one-hour sessions to several days. Although some workshops have been specifically tailored for program participants, all are open to the general public. Those with the greatest relevance to self-services include workshops on self-assessment, the job search, job applications and references, resume writing, career exploration, and the use of reference books and other Resource Center materials.

Special populations. Individuals who are identified as requiring specialized services are referred to staff and counselors within the Center. For example, the state's Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), one of the core partners at the Center, provides on-site services to individuals with physical, emotional, or learning disabilities. To the extent that these customers are capable of taking advantage of job search services, staff may accompany them to the Resource Center to assist them with using PCs and other resources.

The Center has made some adaptations for persons with disabilities and there are plans to further improve access for disabled individuals, particularly for the hearing- and sight-impaired. Currently, the Center has chairs on rollers for individuals using wheelchairs. There is also a touch screen for individuals who cannot use the keyboard PCs for such tasks as Job Services registration and a TTY system for the hearing impaired. Individuals with limited English language proficiency are referred to the co-located Metro North Learning Center for ESL classes.

Documenting system performance. Staff estimate that Resource Center usage has doubled over a six-month period, with more than 2,000 customers served in June 1998. Although there is currently no tracking mechanism for universal individual customers, basic demographic information is available for those individuals who register on the computers with Job Services. Based on an analysis of resumes scanned into the *SkillsNet* talent bank, staff estimate that 35% of Resource Center customers are professionals.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Resource Center is staffed by a team from state, county, and local agencies who, in addition to their duties in the Center, also conduct intake, assessment and career planning, and job search training. When the Center was first opened, Workforce staff developed cross-training sessions on the use of Center technology. Although a training development committee is currently in place, many staff believe that further efforts are still needed to allow them to better acquaint customers with new computerized Resource Center technologies.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

Labor market information. The state of Minnesota has placed labor market analysts, or "liaisons," in eight regional area field offices including the Anoka Workforce Center. Anoka's LMI liaison "localizes" information on wages, employers, occupations and employment outlooks, assists in the development of career exploration workshops, and provides workshops and orientations for Center staff on assisting customers in using LMI.

On-line LMI resources and tools available at the Resource Center consist of the state's Department of Economic Security (MDES) web site. This site contains information on labor market conditions as well as labor and supply for selected "hot" careers as well as regional and local information on demographics, wages, unemployment, and industry trends.

Although much of the information in the state's web site is primarily of interest to researchers and economic development specialists, some of the other tools are more adapted to use by individual job seekers. In particular, the state's *Workforce and Economic Information Systems* is helpful in aiding individuals to analyze economic conditions, demographic and labor market data for areas and regions of the state. Similarly useful for individuals, the *Minnesota Future Work* site describes anticipated technological changes, job growth prospects and required skills, and the *Minnesota Careers* web page includes briefs on employment prospects and educational requirements. In addition to these electronic resources, the Center has a well-equipped and user-friendly reference library, which include directories, books, videos, and other publications related to LMI and the job search.

Resume writing tools. Resume writing tools, together with the convenience of on-site facilities to copy and fax resumes, were cited by focus group participants as a prime reason for their use of the Center. These customers indicated that it is relatively easy to develop a good resume using the standard word processing packages available at the Center and to submit electronic versions of their resumes to state and national talent banks.

Assessment and career planning services. Among the self-service assessment and career planning tools available to customers are the *Occupations-to-Skills Link* and *Choices CT*. *Occupations-to-Skills Link* helps job seekers and career explorers understand how their skills fit best into a variety of occupations. The interactive program, *Choices*, contains interest inventories, advice on skills transfer, aptitude testing, as well as information on careers and the labor market. Printed materials, such as the *Minnesota Career Focus*, provide job seekers with information on growth areas, salaries, openings and availability, as well as information on schools and colleges that train for these occupations.

Job search services/Job listings. In addition to using the new job listings available in binders and posted on bulletin boards, Resource Center staff encourage customers to access job listings through JobNet, AJB, Monster Board, NationJob Online, E-Span, and Creative Job Search, and other web sites such as newspapers that have on-line job listings. MDES is encouraging Workforce Centers to move away from assisted job matching, and is concentrating its efforts instead on developing an open system, in which the large majority of job orders will be "unsuppressed." Center staff therefore view the training of job seekers in the use of computerized systems as an important aspect of their jobs. To further facilitate the job search, phones are available to all customers for the purpose of contacting employers.

Information about education and training providers. An extensive collection of information on education and training is available in the Resource Center. These include brochures and catalogues from technical colleges, community colleges and universities, short-term training opportunities, and financial aid. Electronic resources include *MCIS*, an easy to use computer-based encyclopedia on state-wide education and training programs, and the *Consumer Report* published by the state's LMI Research and Statistics Office, which assigns letter grades to vocational, technical, and other college programs. In addition to these currently available resources, the state's Department of Education is in the process of developing an Internet system that will link all of the state's information on occupations, skill requirements, job openings, and educational programs.

Tutorials for improving skills. There are several tutorials included within the Center's PC software programs. These include tutorials on Netscape and Windows 95. In addition, the Center also offers the *Mavis Beacon* typing tutorial.

SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

Expanding self-service options for employers and encouraging them to use these options is an important goal for the state, as well as for Center staff. MDES currently publishes *The MN Consumer Report,* a quarterly news bulletin that provides information to employers on such topics as placing job orders and finding suitable workers through the MDES home page and other Internet sites. Center staff encourage employers to use the *SkillsNet* system, particularly to recruit job applicants with advanced experience and skills.

The Workforce Center, in conjunction with the MDES, is actively involved in marketing its services to employers. For example, MDES sponsored televised job fairs, partnering with KARE 11, a local television station. During another job fair sponsored by the Center at the Blaine Mall, 140 employers and more than 20,000 job seekers attended. Employers may also participate in the *Employer of the Month* and *Employer of the Week* program that encourages employers to set up a table in the lobby to recruit job seekers using the Center services. Employers are also invited to market their company to job seekers by making presentations and answering job-seeker questions.

INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The Resource Center provides easy access to a range of information for job seekers and the Center is operated by friendly and professional staff persons who are knowledgeable about the range of information available through self-service systems. Several innovative aspects of the Workforce Center are briefly highlighted below:

- Staff at the Resource Center draw on the expertise of many co-located agencies and organizations providing services. This facilitates referrals and makes it easier for customers to access a variety of services.
- There is a broad mix of services for the various populations served by the Center. Workshops, which are developed in well-organized modules, facilitate job-seeker use of self-services.
- A consolidated welfare-to-work program is closely linked to the Resource Center, making it easier for program participants to transition to a self-directed job search.
- The adoption of a system of regional LMI liaisons by the state has allowed the Center to make complex data accessible in a realistic, localized format.
- Center-wide activities such as *Employer of the Month* or *Employer of the Week* allow employers the opportunity to speak about their companies and permit job-seekers to better understand the local labor market.

Although the Center has promoted many innovative and best practices, it faces several important challenges in the years to come. Because of a greater emphasis on self-services, particularly for job-matching functions, continuing cross-training in these areas is essential. Also, because there is currently no systematic way to track users at present, the Center cannot now take "credit" for the outcomes of users of its many self-service options.

Greater demand for self-services also places burdens on the *capacity* of the Resource Center to serve customers. The Resource Center currently serves an estimated 2,000 visitors per month, and, given this situation, staff are unsure of the extent to which the Center should be further marketed. Because the Center is currently closed weekends and open only one night, one potential solution to the problem of Resource Center capacity may be to further extend hours of operation.

In addition to the need to accommodate greater numbers of customers, the Anoka Center also faces important challenges in dealing with special populations. Although certain adaptive equipment is now available at the Center, many staff agree that further investment in adaptive equipment is required for the sight- and hearing-impaired as well as other customers with disabilities. Moreover, because Anoka County has received several waves of immigrant refugees, staff are searching to cope with finding ways to better assist these populations.

CAPITAL OF TEXAS WORKFORCE CENTER (SOUTH)
AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

Texas's model for self-services in workforce development grew out of its experiences with dislocated worker programs in the 1980's and the emergence of the statewide One-Stop initiative in the early 1990's. Faced with the need to assist a broader range of customers, while at the same time allowing staff to help those needing more comprehensive assistance, the state encouraged the development of self-directed services, including computerized information searches and the use of printed and audio-visual reference materials.

The Capital of Texas Workforce Center in Austin (South) was among seven pilot sites selected by the state in 1996, the second year of One-Stop implementation in Texas. Since November 1997, it has been managed by SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. under a contract with the Capital Area Workforce Development Board. The Center had been open for twenty months at the time of our site visit.

FACILITIES

The Austin South One-Stop occupies the first and third floors of a three-story building near a main freeway exit and a bus line. The information resource area, or what is referred to in Texas as the "Workforce Center," occupies half of the ground floor. The remainder of the first floor and portions of the third floor are used for staff offices. The third floor also has training classrooms and a JTPA assessment Center.

Customers enter the Center through a reception area that is staffed by a Green Thumb employee. This area contains registration forms that are required of new users, and a "log in" computer for first-time and repeat users. The reception area also contains a well-arranged bulletin board with up-to-date information about Center services and activities and a space for children with a TV, toys, small chairs and table.

Behind the reception area is a central area surrounded by several computer banks. On opposite walls are areas containing a copier, fax and a circular "kiosk" with brochures and informational sheets describing Center workshops and programs, and other information on community based programs and community colleges. There is also a separate library room with video monitors, books, catalogues, business magazines and a variety of newspapers.

The Workforce Center has 20 Pentium-based computers and four laser printers, in addition to one Macintosh attached to a printer. Each of the computers has a sign posted on the wall above it that lists the programs and software that can be accessed. Computer applications include *MS Word*, *WordPerfect*, *Mavis Beacon* typing tutorial, *WinWay* resume software and several career exploration software packages. Several computers have Internet access through the Center's server and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) system.

FACILITATING CUSTOMER ACCESS AND DOCUMENTING PERFORMANCE

Orientation to self-services. Customers generally receive their first introduction to the Center when they enter the reception area. The receptionist asks customers why they have come, how the Center can help them, and what services they need. After completing a short registration form, new customers are offered a tour of the Center that may last between five and thirty minutes, depending upon individual needs and desires. Staff use orientation tours to familiarize customers with Center services, to gain information about customer needs, and to describe other Center services such as workshops. Staff also provide group tours and more intensive orientations for categorically-funded customers. Special Center tours may also be scheduled for groups, such as counselors from School-to-Work, Summer Youth, and the Department of Human Services programs.

Workshops. A *Career Trek* workshop, which explores job search techniques, is offered as an introductory workshop for both program participants and the general public. One weekly workshop, called the *Success Team,* is a job search and networking club that covers many of the aspects of self-services available at the Center.

Special populations. Center facilities are easily accessible by wheelchair, and persons needing help entering the building can ring a doorbell located near a wheelchair ramp. For customers with hearing or visual impairments, TDD terminals, zoom text, a Braille printer, and voice read-out software have been installed. Individuals requiring special assistance are referred to a staff person from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation who is on-site one afternoon a week. In addition, a Goodwill Industries staff person is in the Center on a part-time basis to assist customers with barriers to employment. Two Center staff persons are bilingual, and two partner staff members have a knowledge of sign language.

Documenting system performance. Information collected from registration forms, contains not only basic demographic information but also "job-matching" codes based on previous employment. After initial registration, and on each subsequent visit to the Center, customers enter their social security numbers on [illegible] log-in computer, checking the services to be accessed during their visit. When they leave the Center, they log out at the exit door and complete an exit survey. This system allows Center management to analyze customer characteristics and to track Center usage. Quarterly reports based on these data are submitted to the Workforce Board and are used to plan activities and to strengthen the content and delivery of Center services.

STAFFING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff and staffing arrangements. Center management views staffing as a crucial aspect of operations. For this reason, in addition to two full-time "resource technicians" and a half-time Green Thumb receptionist, staff from each partnering program work in the Center ten hours each week. In addition, a staff person from Goodwill Industries also works in the Center sixteen hours a week.

Resource technicians ensure that electronic information systems are operating properly, and update binders, the job board, and computer job listings. All staff conduct orientations and tours, and assist Center users with registration and job matching and the range of self-services available at the Center.

Staff training. When the Austin South Center opened, full-time Center staff attended a series of computer training classes. All One-Stop staff underwent training in team building, staff empowerment, dealing with change, and the roles and responsibilities of the various partners. The State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) also provided specialized training on SOICC software and continues to give periodic updates as other programs are introduced.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The state of Texas has excelled in developing and providing a technology-based system to respond to the requirements of its One-Stop system. In particular, SOICC has been instrumental in providing software and other products designed to assist the job seeker. SOICC software packages offer various aspects of career exploration linked to labor market information or information on education and training providers. The Center also provides access to the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) web site, as well as other computer-based resources and printed information.

Labor market information (LMI). The Center carries a range of SOICC-developed software which include the following: *Rescue,* which provides quick access to local LMI, including employer listings and information on skills transferability; *Socrates*, a planning tool that provides detailed local and state LMI; and *Oscar*, which provides LMI and matches job-seeker work values and experience to specific occupations. TWC's web site also provides access to a variety of labor market information including industry and occupation trends, unemployment rates, wage and benefits rates for various regions within the state, minimum wage information, and UI rates.

Through *America's Job Bank* (AJB), users can access *Career InfoNet*, which provides employers and job seekers with LMI related to employment and the job market. The Center also provides a variety of printed information, including reference materials such as TWC's LMI Department's monthly publication, *Labor Market Review*, and a variety of business magazines and newspapers.

Resume preparation tools. Resume writing packages, such as *WinWay* and the resume templates in the *Yana Parker* series and *MS Word,* are among the most popular tools used by Center job-seekers. In addition to these software packages, the library also has a number of books on resume writing.

The Center offers a specialized *Resumes and Cover Letters* workshop, and many other Center workshops also discuss resume development. For example, the *Career Trek* workshop discusses the basics of resumes and cover letters, and the weekly job club, called *Success Team*, gives customers the opportunity to work with job developers to review and modify their resumes.

Assessment and career planning. Self-service career planning is the primary focus of a number of SOICC products. *Texas Cares*—a career exploration tool designed primarily for high school students—identifies potential occupations that match personal high school students' work values, allowing them to explore more than 400 occupations. *Rescue,* which was originally designed for dislocated workers, also contains career exploration components. *Oscar*, a user-friendly skills transfer program, uses a person's skills as the starting point for career planning and exploration. In addition to SOICC products, customers can also use *Discover*, a computer based career exploration product, as well as a series of videos and books on career planning.

Job search services/Job listings. Job listings are available at the Center in various formats. Electronic resources available on the Internet and on the PCs through the state mainframe include *America's Job Bank* (AJB), TWC's *Job Express* for private industry jobs, the *Texas Governor's Job Bank*, *Army Civilian Personnel Online*, and links to the *Monster Board*, which provides worldwide job search information. The Center's own web site also provide links to Austin area job listings, *Latino Web*, the *Saludos Hispanos* magazine site, and other local and national sites.

A *Hot Jobs* board displays local job orders to be filled immediately, information on local employers and staffing agencies who hire on a regular basis, and other information on subjects such as job fairs and job search workshops. The Center subscribes to various local and area newspapers, including the *Job Source*, a reprint of the Sunday advertisements that is particularly popular among job seekers. Center staff also compile and update binders containing job listings for the Austin area.

Information about education and training providers. Information on education and training programs is also provided in a number of formats. *Texas Cares* provides specific information on colleges and universities, proprietary schools, training and apprenticeship programs. TWC's web site provides linkages to directories of colleges, proprietary schools, and programs for special populations such as Communities in Schools, Job Corps, School-to-Careers, and Veterans Education programs. The Center's web site also links to the statewide "consumer reports" (CRS), which rates educational institutions on a number of criteria. In addition to electronic sources of information, the Center's library contains directories and catalogues for colleges and universities, and SOICC publications that provide information on education and training requirements for specific occupations and careers.

Tutorials for improving skills. Several PC stations are equipped with *Mavis Beacon*, a tutorial designed to teach keyboarding skills. This tutorial takes users through a series of lessons on typing and ten-key data entry, and provides an assessment of the typist's accuracy and speed.

SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

Although the Center offers some self-services for employers, few employers currently take advantage of these options. Rather, most employers post job orders by telephoning or faxing the Center. Staff then enter these listings on the statewide Job Express and in America's Job Bank, and post them on the Center's bulletin boards.

Employers interviewed during the site visit use Center services primarily for recruiting entry-level and semi-skilled workers. Most were unaware of the range of self-services available and the ways in which they could use these services to attract individuals with higher-level skills. The Center's management group has made suggestions to improving access for employers, including centralizing job-order taking activities, designing a web site for labor exchange, and developing more aggressive marketing strategies targeted to employers.

INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The Workforce Development Center has been artfully designed to provide maximum services to users, and Center and partnering staff devote considerable energy to providing high-quality services to all customers. The Center is clean and well organized, with information for job-seekers presented in variety of formats.

Staff are experienced in identifying customer needs, have a high level of technical expertise, and exhibit good "people" skills. Individuals with barriers to employment are quickly identified and assisted. Participants in programs such as FSET and TANF are exposed to the range of self-services during workshops and career planning sessions, Center tours, and many gradually transition to a self-directed job search.

The registration, log-in, and exit procedures established at the Center are designed to give the system detailed descriptive information on the characteristics of Center users, the types of services accessed, and customer satisfaction. This system of documentation provides valuable information and allows the Center to respond to customer needs.

Despite numerous successes in implementing self-services, the Center faces several important challenges. Although a majority of Center users have some college education, many customers still have little experience using computers. Most Center workshops discuss the use of technology, but there is still a need for more intensive computer and Internet training for customers with little experience using these technologies.

Similarly, many staff feel themselves to be "behind the technological curve." Because of this, coupled with the fact that there has been a large staff turnover due to personnel changes and system restructuring, further staff training on self-assisted technologies is needed. Moreover, the use of Center self-services has increased rapidly—in March 1998, more than 2300 individuals used the Center, up from 1700 a year earlier. This greater demand for self-services has placed pressure on the Center's capacity to serve customers. A time limit of thirty minutes has been established for computer use when others are waiting; at these times, many customers find that there is not enough time to conduct a serious job search or develop their resumes.

Although several potentially useful self-services are available for employers, these are not well used. Marketing employer self-services and making these services more accessible and user-friendly to employers continues to be a major challenge.

MORRISVILLE ONE-STOP CAREER RESOURCE CENTER
MORRISVILLE, VERMONT

The Morrisville One-Stop Career Resource Center is one of 12 One-Stop Centers in Vermont. Through a strong partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Morrisville has enjoyed success in providing a wide range of self-services options to persons with disabilities and has since become known as a key community resource for a wide range of customers in the local area.

With strong support and guidance from the administrative offices of the Department of Employment and Training (DET), Morrisville has developed a self-service system that includes a wide array of resources for customers with varying levels of education and skill levels. To ensure some consistency across the 12 One-Stop Career Centers, the state has encouraged local Centers to install certain tools and equipment for self-service access in the community resource rooms. Although DET encourages local sites to develop self-service systems specific to the needs and priorities of local customers, all One-Stop Centers in the state, including Morrisville, have implemented a self-service model that is uniformly in place across all 12 One-Stop Centers.

FACILITIES

The Morrisville One-Stop Career Resources Center is housed in a one-story building in the heart of Morrisville in rural Lamoille County. The community resource room is a large, open area divided into two sections. One section is equipped with 5 computer stations that contain a self-application for new customers, statewide job listings, and information on how to apply for unemployment benefits. The other section of the community resource room has 6 computer stations equipped with assistive technology, Internet access, resume preparation software, self-assessment tools, automated information on training resources, and information about careers. The Center also has a workshop room located in the back of the Center.

FACILITATING CUSTOMER ACCESS AND DOCUMENTING USAGE

Customer characteristics. The Morrisville One-Stop Center serves a wide range of customers, including persons with disabilities, welfare-to-work customers, and some youth customers. Although the Center does not keep track of customer characteristics, Center staff reported that some customers using the community resource room have limited experience using computers and require staff assistance navigating around different automated self-service features.

Orientation to Center services. Customers can learn about self- and intensive services in several ways. First, the receptionist greets customers and distributes the "Orientation Packet" containing information about Center services, including workshops, with brochures on a variety of services, including on-the-job training, apprenticeship and work experience opportunities, and services for youth and veterans.

Customers then meet individually with Center staff, who provide a one-on-one orientation to Center services and self-services available in the community resource room. Second, customers can use the touchscreen computer system to guide customers to Center services. This system lists the services available at the Center, including self-access services, and provides basic information about how to access them.

Workshops. Morrisville provides workshops for the universal customer on resume preparation, interviewing skills, job search training, and career assessments using pen and paper instruments.

Special populations. The Morrisville One-Stop Center has installed a variety of assistive technologies to enhance access for customers with disabilities. Through a partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Vermont's Assistive Technology Project[2] the state has installed the following adaptive equipment: one adjustable computer station, FM loop to enhance sound, and zoom text software. In addition, the state of Vermont has installed a special 24-hour TTY telephone line for customers with hearing impairments so they can access One-Stop related services. In addition to adaptive equipment, DVR staff are co-located at the Center one day a week to directly assist persons with special needs. Customers reported that "having someone there to help" made them more comfortable using Center services.

State role in developing self-services. The state DET has been highly influential in its policy towards serving a broad range of customers. For example, the state DET has developed a memorandum of understanding between DVR and other DET partners to ensure that persons with special needs have adequate access to One-Stop services. The success of this Center's ability to increase access for persons with disabilities is therefore attributed largely to the state's strong role in providing guidance in implementing a self-service system that is accommodating to customers with disabilities and other customers with other special needs.

Documenting system performance. All customers using the community resource room are encouraged to sign in on a sign-in sheet. At the present time, the Center is able to document neither usage specific to self-services features in the community resource room nor outcomes resulting from their usage. The state of Vermont is currently exploring opportunities to learn about the usage and outcomes of self-services.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The ten staff employed at the Morrisville One-Stop Center have a variety of responsibilities. Some staff members specialize in serving special populations, including welfare-to-work customers (Reach Up customers). Others provide career counseling and conduct job development for a variety of customers, regardless of eligibility for categorical programs.

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[2] The Vermont Assistive Technology Project used funding from the Department of Education to install adaptive equipment in One-Stop centers and to provide staff training to DVR and other One-Stop partnering staff on using the equipment.

Although there is no permanent staff member assigned to work in the community resource Center on a full time basis, the receptionist or "greeter," whose desk is located in between the two sections of the community resource Center, provides assistance when needed. Other staff members rotate "greeter" responsibilities when the permanent receptionist is not available and provide assistance in the community resource room when needed.

Special populations. A staff member from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is co-located at the Center one day a week. DVR staff provide a wide range of services on site, including individualized counseling to customers referred from DVR, introduction to self-service features in the community resource room, and job development for persons with disabilities. At the time of the site visit, Morrisville had plans to hire a full time job developer to develop jobs specifically for DVR customers. In addition, other Center staff provide individualized tutorials in the community resource room to customers enrolled in Reach Up, a welfare-to-work program for Vermont residents.

Staff training. Cross-training of all staff has been undertaken by the Central Office of the Department of Employment and Training as well as at the local level by career Center staff. During the first year of One-Stop implementation, state-level DET staff provided training and technical assistance on specific aspects of One-Stop operations, including training on using automated tools and equipment in the community resource rooms. At the local level, staff from DVR provide ongoing training to other partnering staff on how to adequately serve customers with special needs, including how to use the various adaptive equipment available. Morrisville staff also attend joint staff meetings with other partnering staff to learn about services available through other agencies.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE

This Center maintains a broad range of tools and equipment to enhance self-service access for a variety of customers. Because some customers visiting the Morrisville One-Stop Center have limited exposure to using automated systems, Center staff have adopted an "assisted self-service" approach in providing self-services. Center staff generally provide one-on-one guidance on how to use a variety of tools and information designed for self access.

Labor market information. The state has invested in customer-friendly LMI products available in printed format and on-line. DET has created a user-friendly World Wide Web One-Stop page that contains updated LMI for the local area and links to LMI at the regional, state, and national levels. In addition, customers can access LMI from the Choices Career Assessment System available at computer stations in the community resource room. Staff noted that although a variety of LMI products are available, customers make less use of LMI services than other self-access service features because they are interested in finding immediate employment.

Resume and interviewing tools. Customers and Center staff reported that the resume writing software is one of the most frequently used products in the community resource room. The Center uses WinWay Resume software to help customers develop resumes and practice interviewing skills. Although the program is designed to be used in a self-directed manner, customers indicated that they need staff assistance to orient them to the program. In addition, interested customers are provided a written product developed by the central DET office, "How to Write a Winning Resume," a resume writing tool that provides real-life examples of effective resumes. Center staff also assist customers with resume preparation by reviewing and critiquing completed resumes.

Assessment and career planning. Adults and youth have access to self-assessment and career planning activities in the community resource Center through a CD-based program called Choices, which determines career interests and aptitudes and describes different occupations. The Center also provides group assessments/testing in basic skills to the general public.

Job search services/Job listings. Customers at the Morrisville One-Stop Center have access to customer-oriented automated labor exchange tools developed at the state level, as well as to products and services available at the local-level. At the state level, the Department of Employment and Training developed a World Wide Web page that contains links to a wide range of job search services and job listings, including America's Job Bank, America's Talent Bank, Vermont's Job Bank and Talent Bank, and job banks of neighboring New England states. In addition, the state has invested in a Telephone Job Line that provides access to statewide job listings 24-hours a day. At the local level, customers can access job listings that are posted on the bulleting boards and compiled in three-ring binders in the community resource room. In addition, a local radio station provides information on "the job of the day" and instructions on how to access it through the Morrisville One-Stop Career Resource Center.

Education and training providers. Basic information about a variety of educational institutions is available through traditional paper sources available in the community resource room, from the state's computerized training inventory, and from the One-Stop web page. Currently, there is no information about the performance ratings of individual training providers.

Tutorials. Customers can practice and enhance their skills in typing with a typing tutor software called Mavis Beacon Typing Tutor. This self-paced program provides a good assessment of users' typing speed.

SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

The Morrisville One-Stop Center has developed a comprehensive menu of self-services for employers, including information that can be accessed electronically from the state's One-Stop Web page, including labor market information and access to electronic databases of job seekers, and information on training opportunities for employees. Employers can also post job orders directly on the Web page.

Despite the Center's array of self-service options for employers, Center staff stressed that employers prefer "one-on-one contact" with One-Stop staff and place less emphasis on directing employers to available self-service features. One staff person noted that "even if an employer saw a resume on-line, they'll call me first before they call the person." While the Center will continue to make self-service options available to employers, it seeks to provide high quality employer services using the traditional "one-on-one contact" that employers reportedly prefer.

INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The Morrisville One-Stop Center has made strides in developing user-friendly products and services to enhance access to self-services for customers with a wide range of needs. The strengths of this Center include strong coordination and communication with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other partnering staff, a clear understanding of the service needs of persons with disabilities, and a wide range of tools and services available in a self-directed manner.

Despite these accomplishments, the Morrisville One-Stop Center faces some challenges as it seeks to further develop its self-service system to an expanding customer base. Local Center staff continue to emphasize an "assisted self-service model" to address the needs of local customers and will need to develop a strategic plan to transition customers to gain comfort in using self-services on their own, while providing adequate orientation services to ensure that customers are familiar with the resources in the community resource room.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER
RENTON, WASHINGTON

The Career Development Center (CDC) is located in Renton, Washington, about ten miles southeast of downtown Seattle. The CDC, a partnership of six organizations, opened in October of 1994 to serve both the general public and targeted populations. The Center emerged from a partnership established in 1989 between the Seattle-King County Private Industry Council (PIC) and Employment Security (ES) to serve dislocated workers. In 1995, The Renton CDC was designated by the U.S. Department of Labor as one of ten Local Learning Labs offering a variety of products and technical assistance to other One-Stop Centers across the country. Consistent with the federal One-Stop vision, the CDC has adopted an inverted pyramid, three-tiered approach to customer services that includes self-services, guided services, and customized services. Establishing a strong self-service infrastructure has enabled the CDC to consistently provide universal services amidst fluctuating funding sources.

FACILITIES

The Renton CDC occupies about half of the first floor of a large two-story building that also houses City University. Once customers enter the front door of the building, a "Career Development Center" placard is visible. As customers enter the CDC they are greeted by one of three staff working at the front desk. Whether they are new or repeat customers, individuals sign in at a computer near the Front Desk, giving their name and primary reason for visiting the CDC—staff appointments, computer usage, resource room, learning centers, or other functions.

The self-service resource area occupies about 3,000 square feet and is composed of two different spaces—the Resource Library and the Computer Resource Area. The *Resource Library*, located next to the reception area, contains hard copy research materials for career planning and job search activities, including books, catalogs from educational providers, as well as a copier, fax machines, and telephones. The room is clean, professional, and has the look and feel of a library, with five round tables where customers can conduct research activities.

The *Computer Resource Area* is located just down a hallway from the Resource Library. The computer resource area actually comprises three different rooms—the computer lab, the computer classroom, and the Internet room. All three of these rooms cluster together and have doorways that face a staff workstation, where two staff are available to monitor and support customers. The CDC has a total of 30 personal computers including 22 IBM personal computers and 2 Apple computers in the Computer Resource Lab and the Computer classroom. These computers are available to universal customers for job search, resume and cover letter preparation, self-paced tutorials, career planning and research. These 24 PCs are linked to a LAN that is separate from the staff network so as to avoid security issues. Computer applications include *MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint*, self-assessment and career exploration software. Finally, a separate room contains six computers that provide Internet access.

FACILITATING CUSTOMER ACCESS

Orientation to Center services. Consistent with the theme of promoting customer choice, the CDC offers a variety of different mechanisms to orient customers to self-services, such as workshops, print materials, and staff assistance. The CDC offers a one-hour orientation workshop called "CDC Services" twice weekly. The facilitator first takes customers on a tour of the resource areas and then outlines the CDC's three-tiered approach to service delivery using a PowerPoint presentation.

Workshops. In addition to the "CDC Services" orientation workshop discussed above, the CDC offers several workshops that provide customers with a deeper understanding of particular self-service resources. "Essential First Step" is a four-hour workshop that includes an overview of Washington's Employment Security JobNet system. During a workshop on "Job Search Strategies" customers learn how to access labor market information and also register on the state's JobNet system. An "Internet workshop" provides customers with an orientation to the Internet and highlights helpful job search web sites. Finally, the CDC offers two workshops on resume preparation.

Special populations. The CDC has a TDD machine for individuals with hearing or speech impairments, and has also placed some computers on adjustable tables to facilitate access for individuals in wheelchairs. As described below, a counselor from IAM CARES, one of the partner organizations, is available to assist customers with disabilities. In addition, the CDC has established a formal referral linkage with Vocational Rehabilitation, located just one block from the Center.

The Seattle-King County PIC, with the support of a One-Stop system-building grant from DOL, is working to promote greater utilization of One-Stop services among individuals with *learning disabilities*. Staff from the PIC's learning disabilities project conduct staff training sessions at the CDC to increase awareness and sensitivity around learning disabilities, conduct diagnostic testing, and work with case managers to determine what accommodations can be made to assist customers with learning disabilities. In many instances these accommodations enhance the ability of customers with learning disabilities to utilize self-services.

In addition, one of the CDC's partner organizations is the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers' Center for Administering Rehabilitation and Employment Services (IAM CARES), a national organization chartered to help people with disabilities secure and retain employment. IAM CARES has a counselor that works at the CDC full-time to encourage and assist individuals with disabilities to utilize the CDC's resources and services. IAM CARES participants frequently use the CDC to prepare resumes, send resumes to employers using the fax machine, and conduct job search activities on the Internet.

The CDC also conducts outreach to *youth customers*. The Youth Learning Center (YLC), another CDC partner, provides basic skills and job-readiness training to low-income and unemployed youth. YLC has staff members on-site at the CDC that provide GED workshops and special computer classes; youth participants are encouraged to make full use of the CDC, including the Resource area. Through agreements with several high schools in the area, youth who participate in School-to-Work programs can receive one credit for taking the career planning and job search module at the CDC, which involves learning how to use computers and various self-service programs.

Documenting system performance. The information gathered when customers initially enter the CDC, whether they are new or repeat customers, is entered into a database that generates daily and monthly reports tracking the utilization of services and resources for continuous improvement purposes. The CDC also uses a Microsoft Access database to track customer participation in the CDC's numerous workshops. Thus far *customer satisfaction* with self-services has not been measured on a comprehensive basis, but the CDC has made consistent efforts to seek customer feedback. Examples include general suggestion forms, prominently displayed in the Resource Library, and evaluation surveys for all workshops.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staffing. Staff at the CDC discovered that as they have increased self-service options and resources there has been a greater need for customer support in the resource library and computer areas. According to the CDC's One-Stop Learning Lab Coordinator, "we quickly learned that a beautiful facility with state-of-the-art technology will be under-utilized without staff available to assist customers." Staff indicated that individuals using the CDC have varying levels of comfort, experience, and expertise with the resources available. The One-Stop Learning Lab Coordinator emphasized that "if people feel intimidated or don't see help that is readily available they won't use the self-service features."

The CDC has a customer services team composed of five line staff and one supervisor. Three staff members are responsible for greeting customers, assisting customers in the Resource library, and providing administrative support to all CDC staff. In addition, two computer support staff maintain the computer network servers and provide assistance to customers in the computer areas. The workstation for these two staff has windows that look out into the Resource library and all three computer areas (lab, classroom, and Internet room). This design ensures that staff members are readily accessible for customer assistance and allows staff to easily monitor the self-service areas.

Staff training. As part of its development as a One-Stop Center, the CDC has instituted a staff training system, called the *CDC Passport*, to help integrate staff from various partner agencies and promote a seamless service delivery system. While this cross training includes self-services and technology issues, the Passport "destinations" also include workshops and materials that help staff learn about all programs and services offered through the CDC (e.g. Dislocated worker, learning disabilities project). The CDC has also held a one-day staff retreat to promote team building and increase knowledge about different programs and agencies represented at the CDC.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The CDC offers a wide variety of self-directed services and has developed several mechanisms to help orient customer to these services, such as workshops, print materials, Internet "bookmarks," and individualized staff assistance. The most popular reasons for visiting the Center are Internet usage, job search activities in the Resource Library, resume preparation, and appointments with staff of specialized programs.

Labor market information. The most up-to-date labor market information is available electronically. WOIS (Washington Occupation Information System), a state database updated yearly that provides occupation, education, school and military information, can be accessed on the PCs in the computer area. In addition, through the six computers in the Internet room, customers can access a new database being developed by Washington Employment Security called WILMA (Washington Interactive Labor Market Access). Ultimately, WILMA will contain extensive local and state LMI as well as other job search information. For example, individuals can explore real estate jobs in a particular county and gain access to a list of employers in the area. The CDC's Resource Library also contains several LMI titles.

Resume and interviewing tools. The CDC provides hard copy and electronic tools and resources to assist customers with resume preparation and interviewing. Several titles in the Resource Library pertain to creating and refining a resume and a few videos on resumes and interviewing are also available. The *WinWay* resume program can be accessed on all the PCs in the computer area. Counselors often assist program participants, particularly those individuals lacking computer skills, in creating a resume using *WinWay*. Resume preparation assistance is also accessible through the *Sigi Plus* assessment program, but according to staff, very few customers utilize this feature because it is embedded within a comprehensive career exploration and assessment program. The CDC has also produced informational flyers pertaining to preparing and sending an electronic resume.

Assessment and career planning. Self-directed assessment resources available include computerized assessment programs—such as those contained in *WOIS* and *Sigi Plus*—as well as numerous career planning books and videos in the Resource Library. The self-assessment program on WOIS consists of 32 general questions about interests, skills, and preferences. Responses to these questions are used to match preferences and abilities with 337 occupations common in Washington State. Finally, the CDC offers a workshop on career planning, *Essential First Step*, available to universal customers. This workshop helps customers assess their own skills and provides exposure to career planning and job search resources. More intensive, customized assessment services are available to individuals enrolled in specialized programs.

Job search services/Job listings. The most extensive job listings at the CDC are available electronically, but the CDC also utilizes a series of bulletin boards in the

Resource Library to post job listings from local employers, and local and state government agencies. The CDC facilitates usage of Internet resources by "bookmarking" almost a hundred helpful web sites in different categories (e.g. companies, Washington State resources, and "best bets") and describing these web sites in a 7-page annotated list. The CDC also has 3 terminals for Washington state's JobNet, the Employment Security database with suppressed information (a new Internet version will contain unsuppressed job listings).

Education and training providers. Information on education and training providers is available electronically and in hard copy through catalogs and brochures in the Resource Library. The WOIS system includes information on education and training providers in the state of Washington. The CDC also has a national database published by Pederson's. Neither of these two database systems includes performance information or ratings of educational institutions.

Computer Tutorials. The CDC has Executrain software tutorials for *Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint*, which customers can use to assess and increase their skills in a self-paced, self-directed manner.

SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

The CDC has found that employers prefer having personal contact with a job developer and thus employers have expressed little interest in "self-services." The CDC has, however, established strong relationships with several employers that have used the CDC as a recruiting site. In addition, each Monday the CDC hosts a Job Seekers Workshop, which features a local employer as a guest speaker. Other employers are invited to attend this very popular workshop in order to conduct informal recruiting sessions. In a few instances, employers have used the PCs at the CDC to conduct electronic resume searches on the Internet.

INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The CDC offers a wide range of tools and resources to help orient customers to self-directed services. These orientation strategies include workshops covering specific self-services, staff assistance in the Resource Library and Computer Area, and a variety of print materials. Customers spoke enthusiastically about the supportive atmosphere at the CDC, characterized by trust, motivation, and high-quality staff assistance. Additional innovative aspects of the CDC are highlighted below:

- The CDC has developed several print materials that facilitate customer access to job search resources on the Internet, including an extensive annotated bibliography of helpful web sites and guidelines for posting a resume on the Internet.
- The CDC promotes access to self-services among individuals with disabilities through a partnership with IAM CARES and the Learning Disabilities project.

- The weekly Job Seekers Workshop attracts job seekers and several local employers to the CDC for information-exchange and informal recruiting sessions. Employers are asked to provide information about their companies and give presentations about job search issues such as interviewing techniques.
- As a One-Stop Local Learning Lab, the CDC has provided technical assistance and support to emerging One-Stop systems across the nation.

The CDC has not yet undertaken widespread marketing efforts and as a result, one challenge they face is attracting a diverse range of customers. In this regard, the CDC has had difficulty providing an adequate base of services to customers with limited English proficiency. As part of its dislocated worker rapid response activities, the CDC has often hired interpreters to assist non-native individuals with their job search, but this represents a one-time effort that may temporarily improve access to self-services. The CDC does have some bilingual staff members that can assist customers and the Center can also draw upon the expertise of one of the partner organizations that has experience working with non-native individuals. Another significant challenge for the CDC has been securing necessary funding to upgrade computer hardware and software.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER: RACINE, WISCONSIN

The Workforce Development Center (WDC) of Racine opened in 1996 and is supported by Racine County Human Services Department, Southeastern Wisconsin PIC, Gateway Technical College, and the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. In addition to these four funding partners, two entities representing the employer community also serve on the WDC's Management Committee—the Economic Development Corporation and the Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce (RAMAC). Funding from Wisconsin's TANF program, Wisconsin Works! (W-2) represents the most significant source of funding for the self-service areas and for the WDC as a whole. In Racine County, the W-2 program is administered through the WDC.

FACILITIES

The WDC occupies almost half of a four-story warehouse that was renovated as a result of a $14.5 million bond measure passed by the Racine County Board of Supervisors—a powerful testament to the local investment in the WDC. A large sign above the outside entrance identifies the Workforce Development Center. All services for the general public are on the first floor, with staff offices and specialized programs on the upper floors. As customers enter the lobby of the WDC they can learn about services either through one of three registration kiosks or from the receptionist. A large "child waiting area," equipped with plenty of toys and on-site supervision, is available to all WDC customers (this is not a licensed child care facility, however).

The WDC has five different rooms on the first floor devoted to self-directed services and assisted services for universal customers.

- Resource Room. An L-shaped room located directly off the lobby, the Resource Room is about 5,000 square feet, occupying about one-fourth of the entire first floor. The room contains 13 JobNet terminals, 8 computers with software for resume and cover letter preparation and internet access, 8 printers, a bank of telephones, 2 newspaper racks, and a self-service copy machine. A library at the far end of the room has about 200 books, two couches and two tables with chairs. A 'help desk,' located in the middle of the Room, has four staff work stations and is staffed at all times to provide customer service.
- Career Development Area. A separate room located at the far end of the Resource Room, the Career Development Area (CDA) contains a variety of resources on assessment and career exploration. Four computers in the CDA provide access to the Internet as well as three different assessment and career exploration programs. Also, two

vocational counselors are available full-time to meet with universal customers on an individual basis and to administer assessment tools.

- Academic Improvement Center. Located down a short hallway from the Resource Room, the Academic Improvement Center (AIC) is a satellite campus of Gateway Technical College. The room has 24 computers with instructional programs that allow customers to work in a self-paced, individualized format to improve basic skills, prepare for the GED or HSED, complete computer tutorials, or use the Mavis Beacon program to improve keyboarding skills. ESL classes are also offered in the AIC.
- Career Discovery Center (CDC). A separate room for youth customers ages 10 to 21, the CDC is equipped with 14 computers with internet access and a variety of assessment and career exploration programs.
- Workshop rooms. There are four rooms on the first floor for workshops.

FACILITATING CUSTOMER ACCESS

Orientation to Center services. The WDC has developed a variety of strategies to orient customers to the services and resources available at the Center. Three *registration kiosks* are located at the entrance, which can be used in a touch-screen or voice prompt format in both English and Spanish. Upon answering a series of basic questions and entering their social security number, customers will receive information regarding services and resources available at the WDC to meet their needs. The WDC has prepared many print materials to acquaint customers with self-services and assisted services, and all computers with internet access have a 'home page' with links to helpful web sites.

Workshops. The WDC offers many workshops to help orient customers to the services and resources available, including several workshops devoted to specific self-service resources. The *WDC Orientation* provides a tour of the first floor (Resource Room, Career Development Area, AIC) and an overview of all services and resources available at no cost at the WDC. The *Tapping the Hidden Job Market* workshop includes an orientation to the state's JobNet database of job listings. Two different *workshops on resumes* provide customers with techniques to create or enhance their resume using tools in the Resource Room such as the Instant Resume software program. *Job Searching by the Internet* acquaints customers with particularly helpful web sites. The *Career Exploration* workshop includes an orientation to computerized employment resources (Career Visions, Sigi Plus).

Special populations. As mentioned previously, the WDC has established a *Career Discovery Center (CDC)* for youth customers. The WDC's JTPA-funded youth programs are operated in conjunction with the CDC, providing young people with access to several electronic career exploration programs. In addition, the WDC has established a linkage with Racine Unified School District, whereby students in 5th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades are transported to the WDC's Career Discovery Center at least once during the school year.

The WDC meets ADA requirements regarding physical access to the Center, and a TTY telephone is available for individuals who are hearing impaired. The WDC is in the process of acquiring new equipment from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development that should enhance the ability of individuals with disabilities to access the state's JobNet system.

Documenting system performance. The bulk of the WDC's efforts to document the performance of the self-service system have involved tracking customer usage of various services and resources, along with a few efforts to measure customer satisfaction. The three registration kiosks near the entrance maintain an unduplicated record of customers that access the system. Using customer sign-in sheets, the WDC tracks usage of the Career Development Area, the Academic Improvement Center (AIC), and participation in workshops for job seekers, ESL and citizenship classes offered in the AIC, as well as utilization of the child play area. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development provides the WDC with data regarding number of individuals using JobNet terminals in the WDC's Resource Room. The WDC's efforts to measure customer satisfaction include evaluation surveys for all workshops for job seekers and a customer suggestion box. Results from a random customer satisfaction survey of individuals accessing the JobNet system from One-Stop Centers, conducted by the state of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, were quite positive. Virtually all customers agreed that the WDC is a helpful resource, that it was easy to get what they wanted at the Center, and that they were treated with respect by WDC staff.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure that customers using self-services receive the necessary customer service, the WDC offers a substantial amount of staff assistance. In addition to the staff person working in the Child Play Area, at any given time there are about twelve staff members available to assist universal customers utilizing self-services and assisted services in the first floor of the WDC. Staffing arrangements to support the self-service infrastructure are summarized below.

- A greeter at the entrance welcomes visitors to the WDC and provides basic information to customers.
- The Resource Room has four full-time customer service representatives as well as a supervisor to assist universal customers.
- The Career Development Area has two vocational counselors that are available to meet with universal customers on an individual basis to administer assessment tools and discuss career options.
- The Academic Improvement Center typically has two or three staff members from Gateway Technical College to assist customers.

- The Career Discovery Center has two full-time staff to assist youth customers.
- There are currently about eleven computer support staff providing technical support to the WDC and the Racine County Human Services Department, which is located in the same building.

Staff training. The WDC utilizes a variety of mechanisms to promote staff development and provide opportunities for staff training. Staff working in the self-service areas of the first floor have participated in a one-day in-service training to ensure that they are apprised of the many services and resources available to customers. Additionally, the WDC offers staff training sessions whenever new resources, particularly computer resources, become available at the Center. The WDC has also conducted a staff retreat at the Wingspread conference facility in Racine.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Customers can access an extensive array of self-services and assisted services such as workshops at the first floor of the WDC.

Labor market information. The most sophisticated labor market information is available through the Internet. Using computers in the Resource Room, Career Development Area, or Career Discovery Center, customers can access extensive LMI through the web page of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. This web site includes county profiles with information on industries and employers, wages and commuting patterns. In addition, the libraries in the Resource Room and Career Development Area contain books such as the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, directories on state and national employers, as well as some files on local employers.

Resume and interviewing tools. The eight computers in the Resource Room have both the *WinWay* Resume and *Instant Resume* software programs. Staff in the Resource Room often provide resume preparation assistance to customers with little computer experience and direct customers to books and literature on resume writing. The WDC has two three-hour workshops on resume preparation—one covers the Instant Resume program and the other discusses creating a professional resume. The WDC also provides customers with resume quality paper and envelopes.

Assessment and career planning. The computers in the Career Development Area (CDA) have three different assessment and career exploration programs—*Career Visions, Sigi Plus*, and *OASYS*. *Career Visions*, a system developed by the state of Wisconsin, includes a self-assessment module, occupational information, and information on education and training providers across the nation. The *OASYS* (Occupational Access System) software program matches a person's skills and abilities to occupations, employers, and job openings. The WDC also has hard-copy assessment tools available to universal customers, including Self-Directed Search, Career Attitudes and Strategic Inventory, and the General Aptitude Test Battery. The WDC has two career counselors on staff that are available to meet with universal customers on an individual basis at no cost. In addition, the Career Discovery Center contains a variety of electronic career exploration programs for youth customers. Finally, the WDC offers nine different workshops on career exploration or self-assessment.

Job search services/Job listings. The Resource Room contains thirteen terminals for JobNet, the Wisconsin job matching system. Job listings can also be accessed on the Internet through computers in the Resource Room, CDA, and the Career Discovery Center. The Resource Room has several information sheets pertaining to job search tips and strategies. The WDC offers about eight different workshops on job search strategies, including a three-hour workshop on using the Internet as an effective job search tool.

Education and training providers. Information on education and training providers is available in electronic and hard-copy formats. The *Career Visions* database provides information about colleges, technical schools and vocational schools across the country. The system also provides placement rates for graduates (when available). Catalogs and brochures on local education and training providers and the military are also available.

Computer Tutorials. As mentioned above, customers can access a variety of computer tutorials in the Academic Improvement Center, including tutorials for Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and the *Mavis Beacon* keyboarding program.

SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

The WDC has nine staff who work together as the Employer Services Team. The WDC has found that most employers prefer having personal contact with a staff member rather than utilizing self-services. Most of the WDC's employer services would be considered 'assisted' services, such as recruitment assistance, posting job listings on the JobNet system, and conducting employee assessments. The WDC also offers workshops for employer customers on topics such as strategic planning, empowering employees, and valuing diversity in the workplace. With respect to self-services, employers can use interview rooms located off the Resource Room or access LMI from the WDC, and in a few cases employers have registered to meet with an Employer Services Team member using the kiosks at the WDC's entrance.

INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The WDC has undertaken several innovative strategies to promote utilization of self-access services across a diverse range of customers. These include providing a child play area; a special career exploration area for youth customers; and a large, attractive Resource Room with plenty of computers, printers, and other resources. The WDC offers an abundance of staff-assisted services to job seekers at no cost, including individual meetings with vocational counselors and several different workshops. The WDC's Academic Improvement Center affords customers an opportunity to gain computer skills, which may enhance their ability to utilize self-access services.

Like other One-Stop Centers, the WDC struggles with ensuring that staff have sufficient training in self-access resources, particularly new technology, in order to assist customers and develop new tools to orient customers to self-services.

APPENDIX B
Resources List

RESOURCES LIST

RESOURCE LIST FOR CHAPTER II: FACILITIES AND DESIGNS

1. *Resource Center Development Guide: State Experiences and Design Principles,* by the Center for Employment Security Education and Research, the Maryland Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of Labor (1996). This excellent resource provides technical assistance in improving the layout of One-Stop Centers and their Resource Rooms, including suggestions for optimal design configurations and ways to facilitate customer flow. For further information see: www.icesa.org/national/update/mypg2.htm

2. *Design Principles for Resource Center Development*, by the ICESA Resource Center Development Project, in cooperation with the State of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations. This report provides a checklist so that Centers can configure their Resource Rooms most effectively. The checklist can be accessed at
www.icesa.org/articles/template.cfm?results_art_filename=lodesign.htm
A copy of this checklist is included in Appendix D.

3. *State Experiences in Implementing Resource Center Concepts,* by the ICESA Resource Center Development Project, in cooperation with the State of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations.. This resource is based on a survey of states, conducted in June 1995, that solicited advice and recommendations for the design of Resource Rooms. For a summary see:
www.icesa.org/articles/template.cfm?results_art_filename=stexp.htm

4. *Introducing and Improving Operations in a Career Net Site*, by the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. This pamphlet contains guidelines for the design of Resource Rooms, including considerations with respect to space usage, floor plans, the use of a greeter/receptionist, and the placement of equipment. The report can be accessed at:
www.icesa.org/articles/template.cfm?results_art_filename=mdopercs.htm
A copy of this Report is included in Appendix D.

RESOURCE LIST FOR CHAPTER III: FACILITATING ACCESS

Attracting Customers to the Resource Room

5. *Brevard County, FL Job Link.* The Internet website for the county's Job Link provides an example of how websites can be used as a marketing and orientation tool. It includes photos and directions to Center locations and a description of services and resources that are available to customers. See: www.brevardjoblink.org.
Sample pages are excerpted in Appendix D.

6. *Promotional video for the Workforce Development Center, Racine, Wisconsin.* This video is used to market the Center and provide an introduction to services. Contact: Debra Jossart, Center Manager, (tel: 414-638-6620).

Orienting Customers to the Resource Room

7. *Virtual One-Stop.* A proprietary tool for creating a virtual One-Stop Career Center, including ways for customers to navigate through a three-dimensional virtual office. For information, see: www.virtualonestop.com.
   Selected pages from the virtual One-Stop for Miami-Dade/Monroe are included in Appendix D

8. *Orientation videos.* Well-done examples of orientation videos that are used to outline One-Stop resources and services include:
   - The Work Place, Boston, Massachusetts. This video is available in English, Mandarin, Vietnamese, French, and Spanish. Contact: Tom Ford (tel: 617-737-0093, ext. 109).
   - Brevard County Job Link system. Contact: Karen Willis (tel: 407-504-2060).

9. *Registration kiosks.* An example of a kiosk that is used to orient customers to services includes the one in use at the Workforce Development Center, Racine, Wisconsin. Contact: Debra Jossart, Center Manager, (tel: 414-638-6620).

Orienting Customers to Specific Self-Service Resources

10. *Internet "Bookmarks."* The Career Development Center, Renton, Washington, has developed an annotated bibliography describing over 70 helpful job search and career exploration websites. Contact: Maureen O'Dea Haynes (tel: 425-271-0488). ***This annotated list is included in Appendix D.***

11. *Guide to Computer Programs.* Centers have developed brochures to describe the software packages they have available on their Resource Room's computers. Examples of how this can be done are provided by:
    - The Career Development Center in Renton, Washington, which has developed a three-page information flyer describing different software programs. Contact: Contact: Maureen O'Dea Haynes, (tel: 425-271-0488).
    - The Brevard County Job Link system in Florida, which has developed a binder called the "Workforce Organizer" that contains instructions for using different electronic self-services. Contact: Karen Willis (tel: 407-504-2060).

Promoting Access Among Individuals with Disabilities

12. *DOL's One-Stop Disability Initiative.* DOL's Employment and Training Administration established the Disability Initiative in recognition of the fact that the One-Stop Career Center system presents unique challenges in providing improved services to persons with disabilities. Its web site describes this initiative and

presents some reports that are available, including the *Report-Out on Discussions with States about Facilitated Self-Services to Special Applicant Groups* and *Suggested Guidelines on Communication Accessibility*. The last of these contains an annotated list of disability-related websites. Access:
www.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/ds1stp.htm. See also
www.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/d-career.htm

13. *The One-Stop Existing Facilities Disability Checklist.* This publication, prepared by the U.S. DOL Disability Initiative (described above), assists Centers with conducting a self-evaluation concerning making accommodations accessible to meet the needs of customers with disabilities. Contact: Rick Douglas, Director of the Department of Labor's Disability Initiative (202) 219-8927. A copy of the checklist can be downloaded from:
www.wdsc.org/disability/htmldocs/dis_access_checklist.html.
A copy of the Checklist is also included in Appendix D.

14. *State Technology Assistance Projects,* sponsored by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The purpose of these state projects is to implement consumer-responsive, comprehensive programs of technology-related assistance for individuals with disabilities. The project in your state should be able to offer guidance on Resource Room development to facilitate access for those with disabilities. To find information about your state's project, go to: www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/NIDRR/traid.html
Follow the link to the NIDRR Tech Act Projects, then to the State Technology Assistance Projects, and finally to the project in your state. The NIDRR homepage also is a source for other initiatives and resources of interest.

15. *The Trace Research and Development Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison* disseminates information and resources concerning assistive technology. Access their materials at www.trace.wisc.edu.

16. *Technology and Serving Individuals with Special Needs,* presented by California's One-Stop Career Center System Task Force, Electronic One-Stop Steering Committee, September 1997. This report identifies general principles that should be adopted to facilitate access for individuals with disabilities. The report's appendix includes useful web sites, as well as examples drawn from states' projects. The report can be downloaded from:
www.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/ds1stp.htm, or from
www.wdsc.org/disability/htmldocs/onestop.html
The Table of Contents of the Report is included in Appendix D.

17. *The Center for Accessible Technology* is a non-profit organization that provides workshops and other guidance on selecting and using adaptive computer equipment for persons with disabilities. Visit their web page at: www.el.net/CAT.

18. *Handbook of Usability Principles*, by the Center for Learning, Instruction, and Performance Technologies, San Diego State University. Edited by Brock Allen and Steven Eckols. This handbook provides strategies for promoting ease of use in a One-Stop, and especially Resource Room, context. One section of the Handbook is

devoted to design strategies for customers with cognitive or physical disabilities. For access to the Handbook, contact the Center at tel: 619-594-5439 or http://clipt.sdsu.edu).
The Table of Contents from this Handbook is included in Appendix D.

19. *Vermont's Assistive Technology Project* installed adaptive equipment at each of the state's twelve Career Resources Centers. Contact: Diane Dalmasse, Director, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (tel: 802-241-3184) or Bernie Juskiewicz, Director, Morrisville Career Resources Center (tel: 802-888-2540).

20. *Recommendations of the Disability Advisory Group to the One-Stop Career Center System of Rhode Island,* by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. This paper outlines a series of guidelines for promoting access to Resource Rooms for persons with disabilities. The booklet includes recommendations with respect to the choice of adaptive technology and notes the importance of providing staff with sensitivity training. For a list of these guidelines, access: www.icesa.org/articles/template.cfm?results_art_filename=ridisadv.htm
A copy of the Recommendations is also included in Appendix D.

21. *The Center for Information Technology Accommodation (CITA)*, sponsored by the General Services Administration, provides resources related to making information systems accessible to persons with disabilities. Access: www.gsa.gov/coca.

22. *Seattle-King County Learning Disability Initiative.* The Seattle-King County PIC has a special initiative in serving individuals with learning disabilities. The project's web site includes useful guidance on working with this population and designing a One-Stop program for them. Access: www.skcpic.org/LearningDisability/LD-Home.htm.

Promoting Access among Individuals with Limited English/Low Literacy

23. *Technology and Serving Individuals with Special Needs,* presented by California's One-Stop Career Center System Task Force, Electronic One-Stop Steering Committee, September 1997. This report identifies general principles that should be adopted to facilitate access for individuals with low literacy. The report can be downloaded from: www.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/ds1stp.htm
The Table of Contents of the Report is included in Appendix D.

Promoting Access among Youth Customers

24. *Developing Effective Linkages between Job Corps and One-Stop Systems: A Technical Assistance Guide*, prepared by Social Policy Research Associates. Chapter V of this report presents guidelines for helping youth access One-Stop core placement services. Download the report from: www.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop.

RESOURCE LIST FOR CHAPTER IIII: STAFFING AND STAFF ROLES

25. *Front-Line Staff Training: Adding Staff Value Using Internet-Based Tools,* made available by ICESA, in conjunction with America's Job Bank. This on-line resource consists of modules to provide training to staff in coaching job seekers and

employers in using electronic resources to conduct a job search or post job listings. This guide can be accessed via: www.icesa.org/national/docs/98prod.htm.

RESOURCE LIST FOR CHAPTER V: RESOURCES AND TOOLS

26. *Handbook of Usability Principles*, by the Center for Learning, Instruction, and Performance Technologies, San Diego State University. Edited by Brock Allen and Steven Eckols. This handbook provides strategies for promoting ease of use in a One-Stop, and especially Resource Room, context. It includes guidance on how to make computer applications and web sites easy to use, with sections on improving the layout and design of information on computer screens, cultural adaptability, and providing customers with support while promoting their self-efficacy. For access to the Handbook, contact the Center at tel: 619-594-5439 or http://clipt.sdsu.edu. ***The Table of Contents from this Handbook is included in Appendix D.***

27. *The Principles of Universal Design*, by B.R. Connell, M. Jones, R. Mace, J. Mueller, A. Mullick, E. Ostroff, J. Sanford, E. Steinfeld, M. Story, G. Vanderheiden. This concise guide lists several dozen principles for designing products to be readily usable by all people. Includes strategies for facilitating equitable use, flexibility in use, user-friendliness, and tolerance for error. To access a copy: http://trace.wisc.edu/world.

28. *Application Software Design Guidelines: Executive Summary*, made available by TRACE at the University of Wisconsin. This report lays out guidelines for designing software programs that facilitate access. To access a copy of the guidelines: http://trace.wisc.edu/docs/software.

29. *A Differential Feature-Cost Analysis of Seventeen Computer-Assisted Career Guidance Systems,* Technical Report Number 10, by the Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development, Florida State University. This report provides an assessment of the most commonly available computer-assisted career guidance systems, with respect to system content, user friendliness, support available from the developer, and costs.

30. *Workshops for the Job Seeker*. Brochures providing examples of workshops that are provided free of charge to the universal customer and that offer job search tips and career assessment or planning include those from:

    - The Workforce Development Center of Racine, Wisconsin. Contact: Debra Jossart, Center Manager, (tel: 414-638-6620).
    - The Career Development Center of Renton, Washington. Contact: Maureen O'Dea Haynes, (tel: 425-271-0488).

    A copy of the Racine brochure is provided in Appendix D.

31. *Minnesota Workforce Center Resource Area Core Materials List*, by the Minnesota Workforce Center. This consists of a bibliography of materials that customers can access in Resource Rooms in this state. The listing includes books and videos relating to job search strategies, career planning, resume writing, and services for employers. This list can be accessed via:

www.icesa.org/articles/template.cfm?results_art_filename=mnos6.htm.
A copy of this list is provided in Appendix D.

32. *The Texas State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC)* supports a web page that describes a number of the career planning and other products that were referred to in this report. It also provides guidance on the use of labor market analysis for career planning, through its *Beyond the Numbers* report series. Access: www.soicc.state.tx.us.

RESOURCE LIST FOR CHAPTER VI: SELF-SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS

33. *The Hiring Advisor.* This is a software package for employers that is used in Minnesota and includes information on ADA and EEO, conducting a job analysis, recruiting for vacancies, and conducting reference checks. This package can be printed or downloaded from: www.des.state.mn.us/general/employer.htm.

34. *Seminars and Workshops for Employers,* offered by the Racine County Workforce Development Center. This brochure provides an example of workshops that can be offered for employers.
A copy of this brochure is included in Appendix D.

APPENDIX C
List of Contacts at Study Sites

CONTACT LIST

The list of our study sites, and a contact name and telephone number at each, are listed in the table below. These individuals can answer your questions about features of their Resource Rooms that have been described in this report.

Center	Contact
Melbourne Job Link Center *Brevard County, FL*	*Karen Willis* *407-504-2060*
The Bloomington Workforce Development Center: Bloomington, IN	Richard Rampley 812-331-6008
The Work Place Boston, MA	Tom Ford 617-737-0093 ext. 109
The Workforce Center of Anoka County: Anoka County, MN	Jerry Vitzthum 612-783-4801
Capital of Texas Workforce Center (South): Austin/Travis County, TX	Rosie Rangel 512-223-5400
The Morrisville Career Resource Center: Morrisville, VT	Bernie Juskiewicz 802-888-4545
The Career Development Center *Renton, WA*	*Maureen O'Dea Haynes* *425-271-0488 ext. 3226*
The Workforce Development Center Racine, WI	Debbie Jossart 414-638-6620

Note: The Centers in italics are National Learning Laboratories. They have extensive resources of their own that are available for distribution.

APPENDIX D
Sample of Resource Room Resources

INDEX OF SAMPLE RESOURCES

CONTENTS

1. *Design Principles for Resource Center Development*, by the ICESA Resource Center Development Project.
2. *Introducing and Improving Operations in a Career Net Site*, by the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.
3. Sample pages from the Brevard County Job Link web page, which provides an orientation to One-Stop services.
4. Sample pages from the Miami-Date/Monroe Virtual OneStop.
5. Annotated list of Internet "bookmarks," made available by the Career Development Center of Renton, WA.
6. *Existing Facilities Checklist,* by the DOL One-Stop Disability Initiative.
7. *Technology and Serving Individuals with Special Needs,* Table of Contents and cover page, by California's Electronic One-Stop Steering Committee.
8. *Handbook of Usability Principles*, Table of Contents and cover page, by the Center for Learning, Instruction, and Performance Technologies at San Diego State University.
9. *Recommendations of the Disability Advisory Group to the One-Stop Career Center System of Rhode Island*, by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training.
10. *Workshops for the Job Seeker*. Brochure from Racine County WI Workforce Development Center.
11. *Minnesota Workforce Center Resource Area Core Materials List*, by the Minnesota Workforce Center.
12. *Seminars and Workshops for Employers*. Brochure from Racine County WI Workforce Development Center.